Daily Report

Central Eurasia

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FBIS-SOV-96-054 *19 March 1996*

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Russia: Chechnya: Grachev Confirms Troop Withdrawal To Begin Apr

MM1803160396 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Khokhlov: "Army Leaving Chechnya"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the Defense Ministry yesterday Army General Pavel Grachev presented the Hero of Russia Gold Star to 15 officers. They were all honored for feats accomplished in the Chechen war. Among those receiving the lofty award were seven paratroopers and three marines, while the rest were officers of the Ground Forces.

At a press conference Pavel Grachev reported that the combat actions near Bamut and Samashki are being conducted by MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] Internal Troops, and the Army is only helping them to carry out combat operations.

Asked about the recent events in Groznyy, the defense minister replied:

"After Budennovsk I stated that the moratorium imposed on combat operations would have a negative effect in future. It would only have taken us a week or two more to rout the Dudayevites. But now not only the civilians, but also the bandits have returned to Groznyy."

At the same time P. Grachev said that the conflict in Chechnya cannot be resolved by strong-arm methods alone. It is necessary also to tackle social and economic problems. The minister would not speak about radical, purely military changes in the conduct of combat operations: "I would not wish to preempt the Russian president." However, Pavel Grachev confirmed that troops not directly participating in combat operations will begin to be withdrawn from Chechnya in April.

The defense minister greeted a question about his possible dismissal with a laugh:

"I know about this, from reports in the media. I have a good working relationship with the president, and he alone has the right to relieve me of my duties. There have been no hints from him. It is another matter that some people are always wanting me dismissed...."

Russia: Grachev Commends Troops Fighting in Chechnya

MM1903123196 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Andrey Gavrilenko: "The Fatherland's Strength Lies in the Soldier, His Spirit, and His Sense of Duty"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] By edict of the Russian Federation president the following have been awarded the title of Hero of the Russian Federation for courage and heroism shown during the performance of special assignments: Colonel Vyacheslav Vladimirovich Sivko; Lieutenant Colonels Svyatoslav Nikolayevich Golubyatnikov, Aleksandr Vasilyevich Darkevich, and Ilya Anatolyevich Kasyanov; Majors Sergey Vladislavovich Kachkovskiy, Vladimir Nikolayevich Kolybabinskiy, Viktor Vasilyevich Shupyak, and Valeriy Viktorovich Yanin; Captains Viktor Viktorovich Vdovkin, Aleksey Aleksandrovich Tyagachev, Vladimir Anatolyevich Chabanov, and Andrey Vladimirovich Shevelev; and Senior Lieutenants Yuriy Gennadyevich Sulimenko and Aleksandr Pavlovich Dumchikov.

Presenting the Heroes with their stars on President Yeltsin's instructions, Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian Federation defense minister, said: "Today it does not matter how you interpret the Chechnya war. There are many views in society on how to fight it and how to settle the crisis. We, the military, know one thing: The soldier does not choose war. But if the Motherland summons him to war, he is obliged to discharge his military duty to the end and with honor."

The defense minister noted that only those who know and judge the war in Chechnya by hearsay can suppose that there can be simple solutions to it. However, the military knows better than anyone that where the country's security and territorial integrity are at stake there can be no superficial solutions.

Today many people would like to weaken our state, to divide it into tattered fiefdoms. People who have pledged allegiance to the Fatherland will never allow such a debacle. The Army, the defense minister stated, today serves the interests of the state faithfully and truly, performing its duty with honor, notably in Chechnya.

"Yes, we would very much like the Chechen conflict to end as soon as possible," Army Gen. Pavel Grachev stressed. "We also realize that it is the soldier who bears the heaviest burden of the war. But where would all the talk about peace in this land be without the sweat and blood of our officers and soldiers, without their courage and devotion to duty? However this war is assessed, the soldier should not be denied the right to deeds of

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heroism, and there is a place for heroism in the Chechen war. The people whom we have invited here today to receive the Hero of Russia Star have proved this on the battlefield, risking their lives for the sake of our serviceman's sacred task of defending our state's unity and integrity and its security. These are Russia's finest sons, of whom it is entitled to feel proud. They protected comrades with their own lives, they freed hostages, they saved civilians, they were first to enter the fray against bandits. These men did not allow the flames of bloody slaughter to erupt in the Caucasus and did everything possible in deed, not word, to bring a solution to the Chechen crisis closer, to bring us all closer to a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

"Any war is not just a terrible tragedy; it also involves the heroism of individuals. This is the highest manifestation of courage and spirit. The officers invited here today have shown by their own example what makes our Russia strong — the soldier, his spirit, and his sense of duty." [passage omitted]

Addressing the invited servicemen and journalists, Defense Minister Army Gen. Pavel Grachev noted that the current task facing the Russian Army is to carry out operations to complete the rout of the remaining bandit formations on Chechen territory. Ministry of Internal Affairs troops are carrying out operations in both Bamut and Samashki. The Russian Armed Forces are assisting them.

In Army Gen. Grachev's opinion one of the reasons for bandit recruitment in Chechnya is the ever-increasing unemployment. Only 10 percent of the Chechen population have jobs. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the situation remains difficult, a decision has been adopted on the gradual withdrawal from Chechnya of units and subunits not engaged in carrying out special operations, beginning from April. [passage omitted]

Russia: Troops Continue 'Large-Scale' Operations in W. Chechnya

LD1903122596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1049 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Mar 19 (Interfax) — Federal forces continued large-scale operations in western Chechnya on Tuesday in the area of the villages of Bamut, Samashki, Staryy Achkhoy and Orekhovo, a source in the federal troop command of in the Chechen capital of Groznyy told Interfax.

Russian troops in that area face about 1,000 militants, "who are resisting fiercely," he said.

With reference to the situation in Bamut, a major stronghold of men loyal to Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, the source said the militants were taking shelter at the local base of intercontinental ballistic missiles, "taking advantage of its communications and underground bunkers."

"Artillery strikes have been launched against the groupings of Dudayev's men," he said.

"According to the latest reports, the militants have not given up their attempts to break out of Bamut despite great losses," the press service of the Interior Ministry troops told Interfax on Tuesday.

The militants have sustained considerable losses in fighting outside the town of Samashki, but they are continuing their efforts to retain it, the press service spokesman said.

The federal troops are conducting an operation designed to disarm illegal armed formations in Orekhovo and Staryy Achkhoy in western Chechnya, the spokesman said.

Civilians are leaving the areas where hostilities are taking place through corridors opened by the federal forces, he said.

Russia: Chechnya: Federal Forces' Actions in Samashky 'Illegal'

LD1803192196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1732 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Mar 18 (Interfax) — The government of the Chechen republic views the operations of the federal forces in the village of Samashky in the west of the republic as illegal, Chechnya's Deputy Prime Minister Abdula Bugayev told Interfax Monday.

The village was subjected to massive artillery shelling anf air bombardments on Monday despite the fact that about 3,000 to 4,000 civilians are still in Samashky, he said.

Chechnya's leadership urged the federal command to stop the shelling of Samashki and to grant its residents an opportunity to leave the village.

The shelling had stopped by 5:00 p.m., Bugayev said, and representatives of the region's administration entered Samashki in order to organize the evacuation of civilians.

The number of Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev's supporters among the republic's population may grow as a result of the "lawless actions of the federal forces," Bugayev believes.

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The republic's leadership put the issue on the lawless actions of the federal forces against Chechnya's civil population to the Russian government, Bugayev said.

Agreements on peace and accord were signed in the Shelkovskiy and Nadterechnyy regions on Monday, he said.

Russia: Russians Blamed for Attack on Chechen Official in Turkey

MM1903094496 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksey Lazarev: "Istanbul Ascribes Attack on Dudayevite to Russians"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Said Ibragimov, former head of the Human Rights Committee in Dudayev's government, was attacked in downtown Istanbul on the evening of 16 March. Three unidentified assailants stabbed him three times. He was subsequently taken to an Istanbul hospital.

Leonid Manzhosin, Russian consul general in Istanbul, said during an interview with KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA that Turkey's religious press is trying to pin responsibility on the Russians for the attack on the former Dudayevite minister. What is more, there are regular demonstrations in Istanbul protesting at the Russian troops' basing in Chechnya.

Ibragimov himself claims that the attack on him was political and that, following the publication of his book about events in Chechnya, he has been beset by death threats.

Ibragimov is now recovering and the Turkish special services are investigating the incident.

Russia: Land Forces Commander Interviewed on Chechen War

LD1603180396 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1940 GMT 15 Mar 96

[Studio interview with Colonel General Vladimir Semenov, commander in chief of the Russian ground troops, by correspondent Aleksandr Lyubimov; from the "Vzglyad" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Lyubimov] My guest today is Vladimir Semenov, commander in chief of Russian ground troops. What then, Vladimir Magomedovich, was going on in Groznyy over the past week?

[Semenov] I think that the mass media have fairly accurately reported what occurred during the week in Groznyy. In appraising what has been going on in Groznyy from a military person's viewpoint I think it is necessary, first of all, to say that here we have encountered fresh tactics on the part of the Dudayevites, who in response to the session of the [Russian] Security Council decided to prove that Dudayev's forces are not exhausted and that he is attempting to take control of the situation. What goals were being set in this regard? Well, above all, of course, the aim was to destabilize the situation in the town, sow panic, and do damage to material and morale. The results are plain.

[Lyubimov] But how was this possible with our road blocks and intelligence? It is quite astonishing given the large number of our units there in Groznyy.

[Semenov] Yes, there are sufficient troops in Groznyy to control the situation in the region — that is, sufficient Interior Ministry troops and federal troops, as they are usually called. They are of course sufficient to control the situation in the town.

[Lyubimov] But they might have lost the town, to judge from the news reports.

[Semenov] Well, they could scarcely lose it, as the Russian army has sufficient forces and equipment there to prevent that.

[Lyubimov] Is it true that Aslan Maskhadov has been wounded?

[Semenov] I did hear that, you know, but I cannot be more precise.

[Lyubimov] I was told that he is a person, perhaps one of many, who wants or is trying to get progress toward peace.

[Semenov] I cannot say whether or not what you say about him wanting progress toward peace is correct.

[Lyubimov] The present-day army possesses colossal power in its weaponry. Are there any other methods of, say, neutralizing the enemy, especially when one has virtually a situation of civil war, when one is killing one's own people. There are Chechens serving in the Russian army, and that is well known. After all, they were called up just recently. In the Russian army there are also Caucasians of various nationalities. There are also Russians on the side of the Dudayevites, and there are Russian and Chechen civilians too. I do not even know what this war should be called, but the most awful feature is that even according to official figures considerably more civilians are being killed than Dudayevite fighters.

[Semenov] Well, you know, the situation in which we now find ourselves needs to be assessed from the very beginning. This war in the Chechen republic is above all, I think, an enormous tragedy for the Chechen people

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and indeed for the people of Russia, too. That is the first point. It is obvious that even with the passage of decades it will be difficult to erase the consequences of this war. On the subject of what kind of war it is and why it is being waged it is essential here too to analyze the situation that preceded this war. A great deal has been said about this and I do not, I think, need to add anything. The only thing I would like to say is that such problems are not solved by the kind of forces and weaponry with which this war began. The army is intended for conducting large- scale actions and of course the actions by the army in the Chechen republic are in no way appropriate for the situation that existed there and still exists there.

[Lyubimov] You mean that other types of units are needed?

[Semenov] There is no doubt that in the given situation completely different methods and techniques should have been used, and our state possesses a very rich arsenal for conducting these special operations. One could compare this, you know, roughly speaking, with the elephant that was sent into a china shop to extract the sting from a wasp and instead of doing so smashed up the shop and broke all the china, while the wasp still remained.

[Lyubimov] Do the politicians not realize this?

[Semenov] The politicians, I think, do realize it. Evidently the politicians had advisers who thought that everything could be accomplished very easily and the problem will be resolved, forgetting that Dudayev after all had been years arming himself for three years, preparing and professionally training his subunits. Therefore it is necessary, of course, to think most seriously about this.

[Lyubimov] The result is that soldiers are paying for all this with their lives. Well, over the past eight months there have been the events in Gudermes, Kizlyar, and Pervomayskoye. The fighters managed to get through to all these places unnoticed. You say that they have changed their tactics in Groznyy, but it seems that the tactics are the same. They are still circumventing our road blocks and our units and are travelling about in a fairly untroubled way. An example that is relevant to our conversation is the fact that the men of the special rapid reaction detachment were put in an awful situation in the capture of Pervomayskoye, where actually 250 men went into the attack against about 250-300 fighters. They also say that this is not their work and that they are specialists in fighting illegal armed formations, but not armed formations of such a size. Who then should be doing this? You say that the country possesses rich resources.

[Semenov] One thing I must say to you is that matters relating to the security of the country, in particular Russia, are very numerous, and particularly at present matters relating to Russia's security should be a key priority. They constitute a vast number of different matters and areas, but one of them is the fight against terrorism. The terrorism here, in our North Caucasian region, is a special kind of terrorism that is altogether unprecedented in the history of mankind. Different approaches can, of course, be taken to this issue, but matters relating to Russia's security must as never before now figure urgently on the agenda of the Security Council, the government, the president, and all sober-minded people in our country.

[Lyubimov] Did today's session of the Security Council change anything?

[Semenov] I hope it did. Like all Russia's citizens I hope that the Security Council will take the sole correct solution on how to solve the situation that has arisen in Chechnya.

[Lyubimov] What is your opinion?

[Semenov] I also think that we should find the sole correct solution. The sole correct solution should provide for more than some kind of strong-arm methods and military operations. Incidentally, military operations will not solve the problem of the Chechen crisis. There must be a large range of matters including ones to be tackled by the Foreign Ministry, ones to be tackled by our politicians, matters to be tackled by our power ministries, and a number of others. But, I particularly think that peace will come to Chechnya, when the so-called Chechen internal dialogue will have had its effect. Only then can the problem be solved.

[Lyubimov] When Grachev was recently in Chechnya, was he really ready to meet Dudayev?

[Semenov] I do not know whether or not he was ready to have such a meeting, but at least it was said by the defense minister that he was prepared for anything, right up to — as he put it — meeting with opposition leaders in order finally to reach some kind of mutually acceptable solution to end the war.

[Lyubimov] Thank you for coming. My guest has been Vladimir Semenov, commander in chief of the Russian Federation's ground forces.

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Russia: Text of Government Edict on Chechnya Mission

MM1803153696 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 6

[Russian Federation Government Decree No. 240 signed by Premier Chernomyrdin in Moscow on 6 March 1996: "On the Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic"; accompanied by statute on the same]

[FBIS Translated Text] In fulfillment of Russian Federation Presidential Edict No. 214 "On the Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic" of 19 February 1996, the Russian Federation Government decrees that:

1. The Territorial Administration of Federal Executive Organs in the Chechen Republic, which was set up in accordance with Russian Federation Government Decree No. 1411 "On the Territorial Administration of Federal Executive Organs in the Chechen Republic" of 20 December 1994 (SOBRANIYE ZAKONODATELSTVA ROSSIYSKOY FEDERATSII, No. 35, 1994, p. 3714) shall be transformed into the Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic.

2. The appended Statute on the Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic is hereby ratified.

3. The pay conditions, additional privileges, and compensation payments previously established for staffers of the Territorial Administration of Federal Executive Organs in the Chechen Republic shall be retained for staffers of the Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic.

4. Funding of the activity of the Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic shall be implemented out of federal budget funds earmarked for the funding of federal executive organs.

The Russian Federation Finance Ministry and the Russian Federation Ministry of Labor shall determine the procedure for funding the aforesaid mission.

5. With a view to ensuring organizational and technical backup for the activities of the Russian Federation Government's plenipotentiary representative in the Chechen Republic — holding the rank of deputy chairman of the Russian Federation Government — the secretariat of the leader of the Territorial Administration of Federal Executive Organs in the Chechen Republic, which was set up in the Russian Federation Government apparatus by Russian Federation Government Directive No. 134 of 30 January 1993, shall be transformed into the secretariat of the plenipotentiary representative of the Russian Federation Government in the Chechen Republic.

6. Paragraphs 1, 2, and 6 of Russian Federation Government Decree No. 1411 "On the Territorial Administration of Federal Executive Organs in the Chechen Republic" (SOBRANIYE ZAKONODATELSTVA ROSSIYSKOY FEDERATSII, No. 35, 1994, p. 3714) of 20 December 1994 shall be deemed to have lapsed.

[Signed] V. Chernomyrdin, chairman of the Russian Federation Government

[Dated] Moscow, 6 March 1996
No. 240

Statute on the Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic

1. The Russian Federation Government Mission in the Chechen Republic (hereinafter, the mission) has been set up in accordance with the agreement between the Russian Federation Government and the Chechen Republic Government "On the Main Principles of Relations Between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic" signed 8 December 1995 in order to ensure coordination between the territorial organs of federal ministries and departments on the questions of restorating the economy and vital facilities for the Chechen Republic population, as well as providing assistance in creating the necessary conditions for restoring and coordinating the activities of constitutional executive organs and local self-government organs in the Chechen Republic.

2. In its activity the mission is guided by the Russian Federation Constitution, federal laws, acts issued by the Russian Federation president and the Russian Federation Government, and by this statute.

3. The mission implements its activity in conjunction with the State Commission for the Restoration of the Chechen Republic Economy and Social Sphere, federal executive organs, and Chechen Republic executive organs.

4. The mission:

— directs and coordinates the activities of federal executive organs and their territorial organs in restoring the economy, the social sphere, and law and order, safeguarding the security and everyday activities of the population, and ensuring citizens' rights and freedoms on Chechen Republic territory;

— ensures the necessary conditions for restoring and organizing the activity of Chechen Republic constitu-

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tional executive organs, as well as organs of local self-government on Chechen Republic territory.

5. The mission comprises:

— the Russian Federation Government's plenipotentiary representative in the Chechen Republic;

— deputy plenipotentiary representatives;

— the mission apparatus;

— territorial subunits of the mission.

6. The Russian Federation Government's plenipotentiary representative in the Chechen Republic:

— shapes the mission apparatus, ratifies its structure and staffing within the bounds of the labor remuneration fund and staff size laid down by the Russian Federation Government, and appoints and dismisses mission staff;

— recruits under the established procedure representatives of federal executive organs (up to and including the deputy leaders of such organs) to work with the mission for the period required;

— makes decisions on coordinating the activities of the territorial organs of federal ministries and departments on Chechen Republic territory;

— shapes the mission's territorial subunits;

— monitors the targeted utilization of financial and material resources allocated for the restoration and development of the Chechen Republic economy and social sphere;

— exercises other powers in line with Russian Federation legislation, instructions from the Russian Federation president, the Russian Federation president's plenipotentiary representative in the Chechen Republic, and the Russian Federation Government, and this statute.

7. The decisions made by the Russian Federation Government's plenipotentiary representative in the Chechen Republic on issues within his purview are binding on federal executive organs, Russian Federation component executive organs, and enterprise, institution, and organization leaders taking part in restoring the economy and providing facilities for the Chechen Republic's population.

8. The Russian Federation Government's deputy plenipotentiary representatives in the Chechen Republic are appointed and dismissed by the Russian Federation Government following representations from the Russian Federation Government's plenipotentiary representative in the Chechen Republic.

9. The mission is a corporate body, has its own seal bearing its name, its own stamps, its own letterheads, and its own bank accounts.

10. The mission is located in Groznyy.

Russia: Lebed Sees Roots of Chechen War in Crime

AU1903131596 Munich FOCUS in German 19 Mar 96 p 297

[Interview with Aleksandr Lebed, former commander of the Russian 14th Army, by unidentified FOCUS correspondent; place and date not given: "Profiteers of War"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [FOCUS] Can Yeltsin put an end to the Chechen war by the time of the elections?

[Lebed] No.

[FOCUS] Why not?

[Lebed] Because it is a mafia controversy on the state level. Leaders from Russia and Chechnya are involved in it. The party is undecided. As long as the present government is in power, the bloodshed will go on.

[FOCUS] Could the defense minister's resignation help?

[Lebed] That is overdue. It is like the case of the well known brothel of Aunt Sonya in Odessa: If business is bad, one has to move and change the whores.

[FOCUS] Is a speedy military solution possible?

[Lebed] No. The roots of the war are economic ones. One would have to cut them, then the war will dry up. The roots are in Moscow.

[FOCUS] Where?

[Lebed] In Russia a zone has developed through which drugs, weapons, and oil are being smuggled. A black hole by which terrific amounts of money have been earned, first with the help of forged bank transfer orders and now with funds that are destined for Chechnya's reconstruction.

[FOCUS] What do you mean by that?

[Lebed] Government circles.

[FOCUS] Why have Dudayev or Basayev still not been arrested?

[Lebed] In Switzerland and Great Britain, Basayev has documents that discredit Russian Government individuals and that could be used to bring them to trial.

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Russia: Reports of Radioactive Container in Izobilny Not Confirmed

LD1903142996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1352 GMT 19 Mar 96

[By Nikolay Styazhkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IZOBILNY, Stavropol region (Itar-Tass) — The rumours that Dudayev's militants have allegedly placed radioactive containers in various sites in Izobilny, a city in Russia's Stavropol region, have not been confirmed.

Last week, a metal container was found in a well of the city's telephone communications. Radiation from the container was four times more than the maximum norm.

Deputy head of the city's administration Sergey Ionkov told Itar-Tass on Tuesday that, after an examination, nuclear experts concluded that the container was a device used by agro-chemists a few decades ago to check moisture of seeds.

Investigators are yet to establish who placed the device in the well.

Nobody of those who had touched the container had health complications.

Nevertheless, local authorities ordered to tighten radiation control in the region, Ionkov said.

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CIS: Reaction to State Duma Vote in Former USSR
LD1803153296

[FBIS Report] Monitored media of the independent states in the former USSR have reported extensively on the 15 March Russian Federation State Duma vote to annul the 1991 decision approving the dissolution of the USSR. Official comment has generally been hostile or dismissive of the Duma action, while some public sentiments have been reported as favorable.

UKRAINE

Kiev UT-1 TV Network (LD1503213096) reported that President Leonid Kuchma was critical of the Duma position, saying that it displayed "enormous lack of respect for Ukraine", although "from the legal point of view the decision has no consequences."

Kiev UT-1 TV Network (LD1503184396) cited a Foreign Ministry statement that the Duma resolution "does not entail any legal consequences for Ukraine, since it is an internal act of the Russian Federation which cannot have any extraterritorial jurisdiction." The statement went on stress Ukraine's commitment to cooperation within CIS structures. It added that "certain political forces in some member states of the CIS are resorting to steps that would seriously complicate the situation in the CIS against the background of progressive processes, and the strengthening and deepening of bilateral and multilateral contacts within the framework of the CIS. The decision by the Russian Federation State Duma should be viewed precisely in such terms."

According to the UNIAN news agency (LD1603191096), the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists on 16 March issued a statement denouncing the Duma vote, which it described as "adventurist" and "aimed at the restoration of the Russian Empire." It called for early adoption of the Ukrainian constitution and cooperation with other states opposing the Duma's action.

Several popular movements welcomed the Duma action:

The Moscow INTERFAX news agency (LD1703200796) stated that a public meeting held in Kiev on 17 March asked the Ukrainian parliament to emulate the State Duma in denouncing the Belovezh agreements. The initiators of the meeting were not named, although some Ukrainian Communist Party figures were reported to be present. The report noted that similar meetings were held in some other Ukrainian cities.

In a Kiev UNIAN news agency interview (LD1603143496), Crimean communist leader Leonid Hrach termed the vote "legitimate" and said that it "opens up the way to signing a new union treaty."

According to the Moscow ITAR-TASS news agency (LD1603070396), leftwing forces in Ukraine's eastern Donbass region met in Donetsk to "uphold friendship among nations and the restoration of the Soviet Union."

Kiev UNIAR news agency reported (LD1703212196) that delegates at the Civic Congress of Ukraine heard their party leader pledge to campaign for restoration of the USSR, while Konstantin Zatulin, leader of the Congress of Russian Communities, who addressed the conference in a "more moderate" speech, "denounced" the Duma position, saying it would "not help integration in a new union."

BELARUS

Moscow INTERFAX news agency (LD1503182396) quoted Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko as saying that the Duma resolution will have no legal effect "both for Russia itself and for other former Soviet member-entities which have become sovereign independent states." Syanko characterized the vote as "rather an internal political move." The same report noted that Belarusian Parliamentary chairman Semen Sharetskiy declined to comment on the vote.

Reflecting a mood in favor of the vote, Moscow INTERFAX news agency (LD1703164896) reported that about 1,500 people gathered in Minsk on 17 March to mark the fifth anniversary of the referendum on the future of the USSR at a rally organized by the Party of Belarusian Communists. Party leaders at the rally declared support for the State Duma position, which they described as "a move towards restoring law and justice."

MOLDOVA

President Mircea Snegur was reported by Moscow INTERFAX news agency (LD1703153696) as saying that the Duma decision "cannot have any legal effect on Moldova, Russia or other CIS countries," going on to dismiss the vote as "nonsense."

INTERFAX (LD1603182796) reported, too, that the Foreign Ministry said Moldova views the Duma position as "directly encroaching on its independence and sovereignty." The Foreign Ministry statement went on: "We are convinced that the intention of some Russian political forces to accumulate political capital by an attempt to reanimate the former Soviet Union may have rather serious consequences and create new centers of tension and conflicts on ex-USSR territory."

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ARMENIA

Reflecting an uncompromising official reaction, Moscow INTERFAX news agency quoted President Levon Ter-Petrosyan as saying on 15 March that the Duma vote was a "provocative act targeted against the sovereignty of CIS member states." He said that the resolution was aimed at "misleading the public and hiding the truth about those really responsible for the break-up of the Soviet Union, that is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with its 70-year anti-popular oppressive rule and the authors of the August 1991 coup." Ter-Petrosyan finally voiced confidence that all CIS states "will decisively repulse this cynical Communist challenge."

AZERBAIJAN

Moscow ITAR-TASS news agency (LD1603183296) quoted President Heydar Aliyev as saying that the Duma position "causes surprise, to say the least." Spelling out Azerbaijan's stance, Aliyev stated that "it adopted a new constitution at a referendum last year, and this constitution is based on national freedom, sovereignty and state independence ... Azerbaijan will never give up its independence."

GEORGIA

Tbilisi Radio Network (LD1503184496) briefly quoted President Eduard Shevardnadze as saying that the Duma position "could only weaken the mutual trust already established among the CIS member states and the integration processes already under way."

Tbilisi Radio (LD1503190696) also reported an interview with parliament chairman Zurab Zhvania, who said that "the Georgian people, like the other peoples of the former Soviet Union, have once and for all expressed their firm will to build an independent and fully sovereign state. No one on the earth can change this decision." He concluded that "a course like this will only enhance the cautious approach of the Georgian Parliament towards the integration processes within the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States."

LATVIA

Moscow RIA news agency (LD1603115896) reported that the Latvian Foreign Ministry did not intend to make any special statement on Duma vote, since according to the foreign minister "this is a political declaration with no legal force." The minister noted that the vote demonstrates "still strong trends to restore the USSR and nostalgia of the past." He concluded that it is necessary for Latvia to work toward integration into the European Union rather than help restore the Soviet Union.

LITHUANIA

Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network (LD1603112796) quoted Prime Minister Mindaugas Stankevicius as stating that the Duma decision has no legal implications for Lithuania.

Moscow's NTV television (LD1503191596) further noted that the prime minister also believed that that such actions "do not promote the development of neighborly relations."

ESTONIA

Moscow INTERFAX news agency (LD1503205896) cited Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mari-Ann Kelam that the Duma vote "has no practical meaning for Estonia." She went on to say that it "demonstrates the inability of some of Russian deputies to make a realistic assessment of historic developments" but also that "Estonia intends to normalize relations with Russia and considers the task to be a foreign policy priority."

KYRGYZSTAN

Moscow RIA news agency (LD1603142096) carried comments by President Askar Akayev at a meeting with Russian journalists: "I regard the occurrence at the State Duma on March 15 as an exclusively internal affair of the Russian Federation." Akayev noted, however, that the action "affected the interests of other CIS states."

Moscow INTERFAX news agency (LD1503181896) reported a critical reaction from presidential aide on international issues Ishenbay Abdurazakov, who said that the vote "meets the interests of a limited circle of politicians and pursues obvious political ends on the eve of presidential elections in Russia."

TAJIKISTAN

In a Moscow INTERFAX news agency report (LD1603152196), presidential spokesman Zafar Saidov did not comment directly on the Duma vote but stated that "Tajikistan was not among those who initiated the USSR's breakup but given the present historic reality the restoration of the USSR fully as it was is unrealistic and impossible." He noted that the Tajik leadership "favors closer political and economic integration between the CIS countries," adding: "This is in fact the only realistic reserve for achieving progress and reflecting the country's national interests in the best way."

TURKMENISTAN

No reactions monitored.

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UZBEKISTAN

In a dismissive reaction, President Islam Karimov was reported by Moscow INTERFAX news agency (LD1703191696) to say at a meeting with people's deputies that "the populism demonstrated by the Russian parliament has nothing to do with our policy of strengthening independence and democracy, supported by the entire nation." He added that the Duma decision "is actually aimed at restoring the former Soviet Union."

Tashkent Radio Tashkent Network (LD1703111096) reported on a Supreme Assembly Presidium session that adopted a resolution ruling out discussion of the Russian Federation State Duma vote. The radio went on to note: "Uzbekistan has no desire even to start any discussions on the legality or illegality of the establishment of the CIS, or on any matter related to participating in any Eurasian union, federation or confederation that might be formed in any document that might be signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia aimed at the restoration of the former Soviet Union." It added that "Any integration process aimed at forming a supra-state body or establishment would not be acceptable to Uzbekistan. The Presidium of the Supreme Assembly once again stresses that the way chosen by Uzbekistan has been adopted on the basis of the results of the nationwide referendum conducted in December 1991, in which 98.2 percent of voters voted in favor of the question on the referendum set by Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Uzbekistan: 'Do you approve the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan?'."

A similar tone was to be found in comments by Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov, reported by Tashkent Radio (LD1703105896), at a meeting with foreign diplomats on 17 March. Kamilov said: "We consider the decision adopted by the Russian Duma yesterday as something required by the internal politics of Russia. This decision should not have any impact on the politics and future of the CIS states." He added: "We want to say that history can never be reversed. None of us should ever forget it. If that is so, then relations between the CIS states will be broad and stable."

KAZAKHSTAN

Almaty Kazakh TV First Program Network (LD1803120096) carried a statement by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who began by supporting President Boris Yeltsin's opposition to the vote. He went on to describe it as "political games" which are intended "to alienate the CIS states, and to sow an atmosphere of instability and lack of trust, to destroy the CIS and, I tell you directly, thereby to destroy Russian statehood." Concerning Kazakhstan's position, he said that "Kazakhstan will never abandon its independence and its sovereignty. The Kazakh people and Kazakhstan will defend it with all their means. The independence and sovereignty of Kazakhstan are irreversible now."

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 19 Mar

LD1903071496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0615 GMT 19 Mar 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW March 19 (Itar-Tass) — Follows a review of Tuesday's Moscow-based Russian newspapers dated March 19. The newspapers widely comment on the passing of a resolution by the State Duma, the Lower House of the Russian parliament, on the denunciation of the agreements which brought forth a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in place of what was formerly the Soviet Union.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI runs President Boris Yeltsin's statement on the issue.

"Whatever motive underlies the State Duma-passed resolution, its initiators ought to have pondered over the consequences which it may have for Russia and the CIS. This resolution is virtually aimed at bringing about a situation leading to a political and legal impasse in Russia," Yeltsin emphasised.

ROSSIYKSAYA GAZETA carries comments by the leaders of ex-Soviet countries on the State Duma resolution denouncing the CIS-founding agreements.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan believes that "the break-up of the Soviet Union began long before the Belovezhskaya Puschcha events — at the moment when Russian Communist Party bureaucrats decided to separate the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] from the CPSU. The latter served as the framework and is known to have been ruined at that time".

In the opinion of the Kazakhstan President, "the self-same forces now seek to disunite CIS states, sow an atmosphrere of anxiety and distruct and to wreck the CIS".

President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine has expressed confidence that "the political decision of the State Duma of Russia is not to the benefit of the Duma itself".

President Alyaksandr Lukashenka of Belarus visualises his republic "only as an independnent state but in alliance with Russia and with all those wishing to join this alliance."

President Levon Ter-Petrosyan of Armenia views the Duma resolution as "a provocative action which is directed against the sovereignty of CIS countries".

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President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan is of the opinion that "the State Duma decision may complicate the real, nascent economic integration of CIS countries".

President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia believes that "the Duma resolution can only undermine the first fragile sprouts of mutual trust and emergent integration processes within the CIS".

President Mircea Snegur of Moldova thinks that following the economic and democratic reforms that have been started in CIS countries, "it is practidally impossible even to discuss the possibility of a recreation of the former Soviet Union."

PRAVDA carries an interview with State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev.

Seleznev said "the State Duma resolution does not give grounds for speculations that someone intends to restore the former state by force".

"The Duma has set an example to the parliamentarians of all coutries by showing that it is capable of reflecting the will and sentiments of its electors," he emphasised.

IZVESTIYA comments on the State Duma resolution on the denuncialtion of the CIS-founding agreements.

The newspaper points out that "this is the first consequantial political act by the pro-Communist majority of the incumbent Duma".

Analysing this fact, the newspaper arrives at the following conclusion: What the Communist Party faction achieved by passing the resolution has turned out to be diametrically opposite to what it expected.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA runs an interview with presidential contender Aleksandr Lebed.

Touching upon the election topic, the ex-general said the bulk of the electorate may come out in his support, too.

"At present, the correlation of forces is approximately as follows. There are Yeltsin and Zyuganov on the flanks with about 15-20 per cent of voters around them. In the middle, there are 60 per cent of those who want to live and work and who are dissatisfied either with the Rightists, Leftists, Communists or Democrats".

IZVESTIYA on conflict between the Bolshevichka clothing factory and the British Illingworth Morris Ltd company, which purchased 49 percent of the Moscow-based factory's shares two and a half years ago.

The newspaper describes the conflict as a typical international scandal related to the Russian privatisation process.

"The two former partners are now engaged in litigations at a law-court," the newspaper points out.

Seeking to sort out the conflict, Izvestiya draws a conclusion that "in this case this is not a conflict between the Russian director and a foreign investor who put millions of dollars into the purchase but is a typical property dispute between two large proprietors for the right to have control over the promising enterprise". "So, this is a struggle between the 'sharks of capitalism' against the background of foreign investments," the newspaper concludes.

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Russia: Ambassadors Told To Notify Heads of State Duma Vote Void

LD1803192296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1738 GMT 18 Mar 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 18 (Interfax) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov instructed Russian ambassadors to notify the heads of the receiving states that the March 15 Duma vote to nullify the accords to create the CIS are null and void. "They do not affect Russia's status as a subject of international law, nor its international rights and duties," he said.

Similar explanations will be given to international institutions Russia is a member of, including the United Nations, OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], etc., a senior Russian diplomat told Interfax.

Special attention will be paid to the CIS states. "The Duma resolution must not hinder the increasing integration within the CIS," he said.

Virtually all the former Soviet republics have criticized the Duma vote, the diplomat said.

For instance, Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov said "history cannot be reversed.

"Uzbekistan chose independent development in accordance with the international principles and the U.N. charter and intends to follow this path in the future," he said.

"The parliament of one state is not entitled to decide on the future of the other CIS states, this is why the Duma vote should be regarded "in the context of Russia's internal politics," Latvian Foreign Ministry spokesman Richards Muscins told the Baltic News Service.

However, he said the resolution had nothing to do with the Baltic states, none of which had signed the questioned accords.

"The Duma vote shows some Russian deputies' inability to realistically assess historical developments," Estonian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mari-Ann Kelam told Interfax.

"The restoration of the former Soviet Union in its previous form is impossible," the Tajik Foreign Ministry said in a special statement. The alternative is a close union of the former Soviet republics on a completely new basis, considering the real sovereignty of each state, and in further development and strengthening of deep and comprehensive integration trends, it said.

The Moldovan Foreign Ministry regarded the resolution as "a direct infringement on Moldova's independence and sovereignty."

"The plans of some Russian forces to gain political capital by attempts to reanimate the former Soviet Union may have grave consequences and create new hotbeds and conflicts on the post-Soviet space," it said in a special statement on the occasion.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry also condemned the Duma vote. "Such actions endanger peace and stability both for the independent states emerged where the former Soviet Union was and the world community as a whole," it said.

Russia's State Duma had passed two resolutions on March 15, which nullified the 1991 accords to dissolve the former Soviet Union and create the CIS and confirmed the results of a 1991 referendum vote to preserve the former Soviet Union.

Russia: Lebed: Duma Vote on Soviet Union 'Cynical Calculation'

BR1903094596 Copenhagen POLITIKEN in Danish 16 Mar 96 p 7

[Interview with General Aleksandr Lebed, Russian presidential candidate, by Henrik Kaufholz in Moscow; date not given: "Cooperation, Please!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The nationalist presidential candidate, General Aleksandr Lebed, yesterday voted against the communists' and other nationalist groupings' proposal to annul the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

[Kaufholz] Why has the agreement from December 1991 suddenly become so important?

[Lebed] It is not. On the contrary, it is completely unimportant. The Soviet Union's collapse was unavoidable, and the agreement is simply a link in a long process.

[Kaufholz] Yes, but why is it so important to the majority here in the Duma?

[Lebed] It is a cynical calculation. The majority believe that it is one of the issues where they can play on people's feelings. Fortunately I do not believe that the ploy will work. It is like in chess where you should ideally be able to see ten moves ahead to be able to win. The majority here only see the next two.

[Kaufholz] In several former Soviet republics there is growing sympathy for reunification with Russia?

[Lebed] That is completely correct, and that is why Russia should also intensify the political and economic cooperation with the new countries which would like

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very much to cooperate, but which have not envisaged giving up their independence. We could make it easier to cross borders — as happens in the civilized part of the world.

Russia: General: European Security Depends on Russia-NATO Relations

LD1803192596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1738 GMT 18 Mar 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Mar 18 (Interfax) — European security depends on relations between Russia and NATO, Col.Gen. Leonty Shevtsov, deputy commander of the forces implementing the peace agreements in Bosnia, told Interfax Monday.

He said it would be expedient to sign a comprehensive Russian-NATO treaty that would give political and military guarantees of stability and ensure peace in Europe.

"State leaders who sign this treaty would meet every six months and control the treaty's fulfillment," said the general.

"NATO eastward expansion endangers security in Europe and directly concerns Russian national security interests. The more NATO strives for eastward expansion, the less confidence Russian citizens have in the bloc," the general said in response to an Interfax question.

He said that NATO leaders explain the eastward expansion by saying "it gives Russia a historical chance to take the path of democracy and the market." However, the general thinks this chance is being given by history to NATO. "Which path is taken by Russia depends to a great extent on NATO," he said.

The general disagrees with another reason cited in favor of the admission of Eastern European countries to NATO. In the opinion of NATO leaders, the Eastern European countries fear Russia.

"Russia is not the country to be feared. This is confirmed by the participation of Russian peace-makers in the forces that are bringing peace to Bosnia," said the general.

Russia: Moscow Discusses 'Crisis' in Iran-European Relations

NC1903090196 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Persian 1600 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A serious crisis is in the making in Iran, German, and West European relations. Following the issuing of an arrest warrant for Iranian Information Minister 'Ali Fallahian on charges of involvement in the assassination of three Iranian Kords and their interpreter in Berlin in 1992, the Iranian Foreign Ministry admitted to such a crisis.

According to today's IRNA report, Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi stressed that the German department that issued the verdict for Fallahian's arrest does not have any documentary evidence of his guilt and Iran's involvement in the aforementioned terrorist actions. He said that circles hostile to Tehran that seek to jeopardize Iranian-German relations have raised the issue of Iran's involvement in the murder of the Kords.

In view of the fact that the mass media under Tehran's control have welcomed the Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorist operations against Israel, one could say that Iran has created this problem for itself. The Iranian leaders' subsequent official clarifications on the Republic's support for Hamas and other national liberation movements as being merely moral and ethical do not satisfy the Western countries. Until recently, Germany was Iran's main European trading partner and staunchly resisted U.S. pressure calling on all Europeans to sever all relations with Iran. Iran has described the U.S. State Department spokesman's statement on Tehran's intention to produce nuclear weapons as meaningless. An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman who wishes to remain anonymous told AFP in an interview that such allegations are baseless. He said that Iran is a signatory to the international Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and all its installations are under the IAEA's control.

Russia: Duma Speaker Positive on Cooperation With Iraq

LD1803223296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1856 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Mar 18 (Interfax) — Russia has good prospects for cooperation with Iraq, Russian State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev said at a meeting with Iraqi Ambassador Hasan Fahmi Jum'ah Monday, Duma press office told Interfax.

"Although relations between our countries are currently restricted by international sanctions imposed against Iraq by a U.N. security Council resolution, we are thinking about the future development of broad bilateral ties with a friendly state," Seleznev told Fahmi Jum'ah.

He also stated Russia's intention to provide humanitarian aid to the Iraqi population, which is suffering from starvation and diseases, the press office reported. "If a mutually acceptable concept of a humanitarian corridor is found, Russian aid to the Iraqi people will increase," said Seleznev.

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Fahmi Jum'ah invited a Duma delegation to Iraq. He also stressed that "Iraq views Russia as a major ally, and its market is open for Russian companies." The ambassador said the Duma's political role in Russia was increasing and expressed the hope that it would contribute to a decision to lift sanctions against Iraq.

Seleznev told Fahmi Jum'ah the Duma will respond to the invitation to visit Iraq and hear the point of view of Iraqi colleagues on the implementation of the U.N. security Council resolution.

Russia: Geneva Meeting Seen as U.S. Move To Score Political Points

MM1803150796 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Aleksandr Sychev: "Russia Ignores Meeting in Geneva and Awaits Contact Group in Moscow"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russia will not participate in the session of the Contract Group on the settlement of the Yugoslav conflict which Washington is convening in Geneva.

This decision by Moscow, a tough line from the diplomatic viewpoint, was prompted, the Russian Foreign Ministry explained, by the fact that a conference of the Contact Group countries has long been planned for 23 March in Moscow. As organizer of the meeting the Russian Foreign Ministry has done much preparatory work. Everything is ready for the meeting, and there is no need to go to Geneva, especially since the United States informed the other members of the Contact Group (which also includes Russia, Britain, France, and Germany) of its decision to convene on 18 March only two days ago.

Why this haste? Why could Washington not wait another four days or so until the planned Moscow conference?

There are no apparent reasons for the hurry. The situation in Yugoslavia has become neither better nor worse in recent days. The Muslims and Croats still cannot find a common language within the framework of the Muslim-Croat federation that was set up at Washington's insistence. The exodus of Serbs from Sarajevo is continuing. The once Serbian districts of the city are today practically entirely empty and are in the grip of fires. As they leave, the Serbs set fire to their own homes, so as to leave nothing for the city's new authorities. Nor has the situation grown more tense in Kosovo, a region of Serbia inhabited primarily by ethnic Albanians.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher explained Washington's move in terms of the desire "to give new impetus to the Dayton agreements." A vague diplomatic formula used in many circumstances, but explaining nothing. The United States' real motives could lie in the fact that the peace settlement process in Yugoslavia, of which Washington is considered the instigator, has begun to mark time. It is planned to discuss all the problems hampering the continuation of the settlement at the Contact Group session in Moscow. By preempting the Moscow meeting Washington is, so to speak, belittling its significance and the role of the other participants in the settlement of the conflict.

The suspicion that Washington is trying to score political points at the expense of its partners in the Yugoslav process could certainly be one explanation for Moscow's unexpected firmness. But also, Washington did not leave Moscow much time to prepare for Geneva. In any event, it cannot be ruled out that the Geneva meeting, at which Russia will not be present, may deprive the Moscow session of all meaning. After all, the gap between them is only four days. No new problems needing to be discussed might arise during that time.

Russia: U.S. Official Aid Being Cut 'Substantially'

MM1803154096 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 15

[Report by Gennadiy Voskresenskiy: "U.S. Congress Cuts Volume of Aid to Russia. U.S. Business Circles Criticize Decision"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Persistent calls to end aid to Russia were heard in the U.S. Congress almost throughout last year.

Many congressmen believe that their voters are opposed to such aid since it merely leads to a growing budget deficit. Moreover, the recent differences between the U.S. Administration and the Russian Federation Government (over the NATO question, in connection with the sale of Russian nuclear reactors to Iran, Russia's combat operations in Chechnya, etc.) have only poured more and more fuel on the congressional "flames," helping to increase the number of opponents of aid.

The calls now seem to be becoming reality. According to a report from official sources, U.S. aid to Russia will at least be cut substantially in volume, if not stopped altogether.

As a result of a whole series of restrictions recently introduced by the U.S. Congress, U.S. aid to Russia will total no more than $150 million this year. Approximately $50 million more might be provided (this, incidentally, is rather problematic) out of additional appropriations. This as a whole is just one-sixth of the volume of U.S. aid provided in 1994.

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Congressmen are confident that the major international financial organizations will take on the rest of the aid. Such as, for example, the World Bank, which, according to Richard Morningstar, special adviser on questions of aid to the CIS republics, supposedly possesses "practically inexhaustible potential for granting credits and loans."

It also remains for the USAID — the biggest organization implementing in Russia and other CIS countries a number of programs in the spheres of privatization, antimonopoly policy, the formation of the capital market, etc. — to count now on "hundreds and hundreds of millions from the World Bank and the European Union." But the USAID, which is faced with "racking its brains" over the problem of maintaining the number of the programs being implemented, seems to take a very, very negative view of the decision of its own Congress.

"We are now in the position of a physician who must either treat a patient without medicines or abandon him at the very height of illness," Thomas Dine, the USAID director coordinating programs for the CIS republics, declared, in particular, in a REUTER interview. Addressing members of the House International Relations Committee, he described the congressional decision as a "worthless action."

The decision of the U.S. Congress did not elicit an enthusiastic response from U.S. business circles either.

Thus, James Tilley, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Russia, unambiguously considers that decision "shortsighted and taking into account neither the complexity of the reforms process in Russia nor long-term U.S. interests."

According to him, "it seems exceptionally important that the United States should show that it is involved in the reform process in Russia along with the Russian people and thereby confirm its interest in the reforms' results. If we stand aside and stop giving support, we will thereby support directly and indirectly those forces and trends in Russian society which have nothing in common with U.S. interests."

"It is clear that we are in a difficult position at a time when the new Russia is seeking its path.... But U.S. policy toward Russia — both on the question of aid and on a general plane — must be built on the basis of long-term U.S. interests, not on totally unsubstantiated considerations of the current moment," Mr. Tilley declared in an interview with the magazine AMCHAM NEWS, expressing the general viewpoint of the board of directors of the American Chamber of Commerce in Russia.

It only remains to add that this chamber unites practically all influential U.S. companies that participate in U.S.-Russian trade and economic cooperation in one way or another.

Russia: Deputy Comments on U.S. Poultry Imports

LD1803234896 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Report by S. Shcherbal in Krasnodar; passages within quotation marks recorded; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified announcer] Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zaveryukha said at a meeting in Voronezh today that Russia would be guided by principle on the issue of poultry imports from the United States. The issuing of licences for the import of chicken legs into Russia has been suspended from today. Customs will not permit the legs to be imported until the issue of the meat being checked by U.S. vets for salmonella is resolved.

[Shcherbal] A few days ago State Duma Deputy Aleksandr Tkachev read out a statement from the Agrarian faction on the situation regarding the chicken legs at a news conference in Krasnodar.

[Tkachev] "More than 150,000 tonnes of imported chicken has accumulated in Russia. Experts believe that such reserves will last Russians three to four months. That gives the U.S. side enough time to take measures guaranteeing the quality and safety of the product being supplied to the Russian market while our Russian producers will be able to fill the niche that appears on the domestic market."

[Shcherbal] The triumphal march of Bush's legs across the Russian market brought domestic poultry farming to its knees.

[V. Slepukhin, director of Russian State Pedigree Factory in Korenovsk] "Practically 85 percent of the Kuban's poultry farming has been halted."

[Shcherbal] The cost price of a kilogram of chicken produced in the Kuban's poultry farms is on average 15,000 rubles while the U.S. chicken legs are sold for 9-10,000 — and that includes customs duty and transport costs. Why is that? Is it because of superior technology? Not at all. It is all a matter of state subsidies over there and back here. Over there they are over 40 percent. Here — only 12 and, on top of that, the money is late in coming.

[Tkachev] "In the opinion of the Agrarian deputies, the Russian Government needs to care for the interests of their domestic poultry farmers to a much greater degree.

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Otherwise, Russian poultry farming will disappear altogether as a sector."

Russia: Russian Customs Puzzled by Decrees on U.S. Poultry

LD1803183796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1638 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 18 (Interfax) — Russian customs officials have received no orders to stop the import of U.S. poultry, Valeriy Kruglikov, deputy director of the State Customs Committee, told Interfax Monday.

Customs officials, in turn, have given no orders of their own, he said.

"This product continues to enter through Russian Federation customs just as it did previously," Kruglikov said, saying he was puzzled by information on the ban on chicken imports sent from the United States after February 16.

Vyacheslav Avilov, Russia's chief food inspector, told Interfax earlier that from March 16 onward, only chicken sent from the United States before February 16 would be allowed in.

Russia: Primakov: Athens, Moscow Favor Economic Ties Development

LD1803211796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1738 GMT 18 Mar 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Mar 18 (Interfax) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov said that during the talks with Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos the sides spoke in favor of developing economic cooperation.

According to Primakov, he discussed with Pangalos Russian gas supplies to Greece, the construction of an alumina plant and an oil pipeline from Burgas to Alexandroupolis via Bulgaria.

Primakov said the positions of Moscow and Athens on international issues largely coincide. In particular, the sides agreed that a new European security system must take into account the interests of all countries.

He also voiced support for Greece's efforts to resolve "the Cyprus issue peacefully and on a just basis."

Pangalos, for his part, described as a mistake the stand of those who believe that NATO enlargement "can be achieved at the cost of isolating Russia."

He reiterated the Athens stand that "Russia is a great European power and its point of view and interests must be taken into consideration and respected."

Pangalos said Greece will do everything possible to accelerate the ratification of the agreement on partnership and cooperation between Russia and the European Union, signed at Corfu in 1994.

Speaking about economic cooperation, he said the sides agreed to hold a meeting of experts from Russia, Greece and Bulgaria in Athens to discuss the remaining problems and conclude preparations for the creation of a Transbalkan Pipeline company. The upcoming meeting will also deal with the issue of the sides' shares in the company's charter capital, said Pangalos.

He also said the share of state and private capital in the project is also to be determined. "However, the issue mostly concerns Bulgaria and Greece," he said.

As for the gas project, Pangalos said that Primakov raised the issue of underfinancing of the works. He expressed hope that the problems will be resolved and the project will be implemented in the near future.

According to Pangalos, the project of the alumina plant construction is also facing financial problems which the sides will discuss on the technical level.

He said that during the talks the ministers exchanged notes on a new, simplified, process of visa issuing. According to him, the changes will mainly benefit diplomats and persons with diplomatic passports. However, the notes also envisage the issue of multiple visas for Russian and Greek business people working in these countries.

Speaking about relations between Greece and Turkey, Pangalos accused Ankara of disrespect for human rights, of continuing occupation of Cyprus and long-time threats to Greece, of trying to act as a regional superpower by imposing its will on its neighbors and of attempts to wreak havoc in the Caucasus.

According to Pangalos, Turkish officials say "there is a Turkish people in the Central Asia and time has come for its unification."

He also said that those "playing with the Turkish chauvinism and encouraging it in various operations in Chechnya and elsewhere" must think twice.

In this connection Pangalos said that his country will block European Union aid to Turkey until the country "begins thinking in civilized categories."

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Russia: Shevardnadze, Primakov Meet Behind Closed Doors

LD1803212096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2104 GMT 18 Mar 96

[By Yuriy Kozlov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 19 (Itar-Tass) — Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze met Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov on Monday ahead of his talks with President Boris Yeltsin scheduled for Tuesday.

The meeting, which was held in the Kremlin behind the closed doors, was generally viewed as a prologue to Shevardnadze's two-day official visit to Russia that began today.

Both Shevardnadze and Primakov refused to meet the press after their talks, which journalists linked not so much with the nature of the problems they had discussed as with the two men's reluctance to anticipate the upcoming discussions with Yeltsin to be held on Tuesday.

During his visit, Shevardnadze will also meet Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev and Russian Federation Council Chairman Yegor Stroyev.

The talks are expected to focus on bilateral relations and ways to settle the conflicts in Abkhazia.

The sides will also exchange on the situation in Chechnya and South Ossetia.

Russia and Georgia will sign a joint declaration and a number of bilateral agreements, including on trade and economic cooperation.

Russia: Yeltsin, Shevardnadze Plan 'Big Caucasian Summit'

LD1903114396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1110 GMT 19 Mar 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW March 19 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin and Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze "got back to their old idea: to hold a meeting in Vladikavkaz," Yeltsin told journalists today after his meeting with Shevardnadze. "First we did not know whether we should meet only with leaders of the North Caucasian republics, integrated in the Russian Federation, or not. Shevardnadze persuaded me to hold a big Caucasian summit, because we are facing common problems," Yeltsin continued.

According to the Russian president, he will contact heads of the North Caucasian republics, integrated in the Russian Federation, and Shevardnadze will contact the Armenian and Azeri leaders.

Russia: Primakov Visit to Poland Overturns 'Chilly' Predictions

MM1803160496 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by special correspondents Yelena Ovcharenko and Anatoliy Anisimov: "Will Primakov Swell the Ranks of Shuttle Visitors?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Warsaw — The Volvo which Yevgeniy Primakov was given in Warsaw was, as experienced people pointed out, more befitting a president than a minister. And, by the way, they do not form up the guard and play the national anthem for every visiting foreign minister.

The Russian foreign minister is methodically making good all his predecessor's omissions. After visiting a host of CIS countries in short order, Primakov headed off to Warsaw, whose eponymous pact no longer exists now.

In the eight years which have passed since the last official visit here by a foreign minister from Moscow quite a few problems have built up. If you magnified those problems by the interpretation of the local press and the desire of right-wingers to ascribe all the "honorary electrician" Walesa's mistakes to the "Russian friends," the prospects for the visit looked pretty dour. Take, for example, the hysteria in the newspapers here about the mythical "extraterritorial corridor" which will pass through sovereign Poland, joining Grodno to Kaliningrad by a "wide tank track." In actual fact, this involves plans for the construction of a transit route, which has been under discussion since the early nineties and is a purely commercial and mutually beneficial venture.

Some people have started talking about compensation for Poles who suffered under Soviet rule. It is estimated that indemnifying just the heirs of people relocated to Siberia would amount to $4 million.

In short, there were so many problems that the ministers ran the risk of ending their talks with another chilly parting lasting eight years. However, the discussion proceeded in quite a different vein. They listened to each other with great attention. Yevgeniy Primakov' counterpart, Dariusz Rosati, stated that the visit was a "symbol of the fact that Polish-Russian relations are entering a phase of very close cooperation and are becoming genuinely good- neighborly in nature." Primakov is not a young lady, and the gentlemanly courtesy shown here is clearly no concession to diplomatic protocol.

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What has been achieved? A serious discussion took place on the topic of NATO expansion. On the Polish side's initiative, it was decided to regard the so-called "corridor" issue as a misunderstanding. Moreover, Warsaw has nothing against discussing the topic of transport links. Let us stress here: There can be no question of hedging it with conditions which are politically or environmentally unacceptable to Poland.

And, finally, a bilateral commission is to conduct a great deal of work on the whole range of trade, economic, financial, and credit relations in preparation for the visit to Russia by Polish President Aleksandr Kwasniewski, which, it was announced yesterday, is scheduled for 9-11 April.

....More than 2 million of our compatriots visited Poland last year. Many of them were there engaged in "shuttle trade" business. And if Minister Primakov swells their ranks — in the capacity, of "shuttle diplomacy," of course — our countries will be none the worse for it.

Russia: Yeltsin Directive on Phased Lifting of Ex-Yugoslav Embargo

MM1903100396 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 3

[Directive of the Russian Federation president No. 112, signed by President Yeltsin and dated 9 March 1996: "On Measures Associated With the Fulfillment of UN Security Council Resolution 1021 of 22 November 1995"]

[FBIS Translated Text] 1. In connection with UN Security Council Resolution 1021 of 22 November 1995, all participants in and parties to the Russian Federation's military-technical cooperation with foreign countries are to proceed in their activity on the basis that the operation of the measures imposed in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 713 of 25 September 1991 with regard to the states located on the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — is to cease by stages as follows:

a) from the day of the entry into force of the present directive, the ban formerly established on the Russian Federation's military-technical cooperation with the said states is lifted, with the exception of deliveries to these states of weapons and military equipment (arms and military hardware, ammunition, spare parts, and other military property);

b) from 14 March 1996 all provisions concerning the embargo on deliveries to the said states of weapons and military equipment are lifted, with the exception of the ban on delivery to these states of heavy arms (all tanks and armored vehicles, all artillery of 75mm caliber or above, all mortars of 81 mm caliber or above, and all antiaircraft weapons of 20mm caliber or above), ammunition for them, mines, and combat aircraft and helicopters;

c) after 11 June 1996 and following the submission by the UN secretary general of a report to the UN Security Council on the implementation of Appendix 1B (Agreement on Regional Stabilization) to the General Framework Agreement on Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina of 14 December 1995, as was agreed by the sides, all provisions concerning the embargo on deliveries of weapons and military equipment to the said states are lifted, provided that the UN Security Council does not decide otherwise.

2. The present directive enters into force on the day of signing.

[Signed] Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin
[Dated] 9 March 1996
No. 112

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Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Greets Georgia's Shevardnadze in Kremlin Ceremony

LD1903083596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0817 GMT 19 Mar 96

[By Andrey Surzhanskiy and Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW March 19 (Itar-Tass) — An official ceremony of welcoming Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, who came to Moscow for an official visit, was held today in the St. George Hall of the Kremlin. The Georgian leader was welcomed by President Yeltsin.

Their tete-a-tete meeting began immediately after the ceremony.

When greeting the Georgian leader, Yeltsin pointed out that they had a "busy agenda" of the talks.

After the tete-a-tete meeting, a meeting of delegations of the two countries with a greater number of participants is expected to be held.

Russia: Yeltsin Denounces Duma Decision, Agrees to CIS Summit

LD1903121496 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 19 Mar 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Boris Yeltsin again sharply criticized the Duma today:

[Begin Yeltsin recording] It is a question of the actions of the State Duma which adopted such a foolish decision, one which is harmful to Russia, and not just to Russia but to many other states, too. To encroach on Russia's statehood is prosecutable under the Constitution, it is impermissible under the Constitution, where it clearly states, in Articles 13 and 103, where the rights of the Duma are enumerated, there is no question at all of the Duma having to debate Russia's statehood. It did not have the right to discuss it. And this has caused a stir throughout the world. It has no particularly great significance, but it has gotten people worked up. This is a very serious matter and the Duma should answer for its irresponsible actions. Therefore, if all the heads of state agree, I am happy to meet anywhere. [end recording]

Boris Yeltsin said this after his talks with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. For his part, Shevardnadze told journalists that he had proposed to Boris Yeltsin that an extraordinary meeting of the leaders of the CIS countries should be held to discuss the situation that has arisen following the adoption by the State Duma of the decision virtually revoking the Belovezhskaya Pushcha agreements. In Boris Yeltsin's opinion, it would be more convenient to hold such a meeting in Moscow. [video shows Yeltsin with Foreign Minister Primakov at his side]

Russia: Zyuganov Critical of Yeltsin Over Duma Decision

LD1803212596 Moscow INFORMATSIONNOYE AGENTSTVO EKHO MOSKVY in Russian 2015 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] "The clamor around the State Duma decision to revoke the Belovezh Accords has a simple purpose — Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] and his entire crew have lost their main trump card in the preelection battle," Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF], said live on the air to Ekho Moskvy Radio Station.

"First of all, he signed the agreement, which brought the country down, and today he is taking steps to reunite it but this should be based on the will of citizens who, by a majority of votes in March 1991, confirmed their desire to live in a common country," the CPRF leader said.

In Zyuganov's opinion "the State Duma decision gives executive power the legal basis to hold talks more effectively on restoring the ties which have been destroyed."

Russia: Duma Decision on Restoring USSR Seen Helping Yeltsin

MK1903084796 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Tatyana Malkina: "Communists Have Given the President Cause"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a time when the opposition part of parliament, satisfied, is taking a rest from righteous labor, the Kremlin is rejoicing. Presidential strategists are getting ready to partake of the fruit to which the Communists treated Boris Yeltsin gratuitously, that is to say, free of charge. The "moral-political action" by the opposition, as yesterday's vote in the Duma was described by Anatoliy Lukyanov, according to people in the president's inner circle will provide an excellent jump start for the "great power" dimension of Mr. Yeltsin's election campaign. The authorities intend to derive maximum benefit from the prank by the Communists, who themselves hardly take their recent legislative achievement seriously. First, an attempt can be made to stun "common citizens" sympathetic to the oppositionists with the depth of the latter's unscrupulousness and legal illiteracy. Second — against the backdrop of this

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ideal bugbear — it is useful once more to indicate to the world, both nearby and more distant, that Boris Yeltsin remains the sole healthy force in a reforming Russia. Third, and especially important, is to wrest the great power banner from the hands of indiscreet rivals in a legally appropriate manner. In any event, in the very near future attempts should be expected at inculcating into Russians' minds the following thesis: Five years ago the Soviet people said that they "want the USSR to be preserved in the form of a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics which will fully guarantee the rights and freedoms of an individual of any nationality"; USSR leaders at the time failed to ensure that renovation and gave way to a person who began to consistently and intensively fulfill the will of the people and renovate the federation: Boris Yeltsin. Moreover, it is planned that already in March-April the results of his work, unseen to the world, on preserving "the USSR in the form of..." will become obvious even to the philistine. Having successfully passed the stage of "decisive dissociation before unification," Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kirgizia [Kyrgyzstan] are planning to sign a series of unification agreements. Boris Yeltsin himself thus described the plans: "We shall pursue integration consistently, without hurry, as each Commonwealth state gets ready to create a single normative base, gradually evolving toward deepening integration and then a federation. I do not deny this."

There is yet another aspect to this situation that is useful for Mr. Yeltsin: He can tentatively, by way of testing the ground, yell at the deputies, thus far only indicating the possible consequences of their lightmindedness for themselves. So yesterday the president already addressed the Duma members with a rhetorical observation: "If you make such decisions and no one comes to you and no one is going to join this Union, what is Russia then today? You have restored the Soviet Union, but it does not actually exist. What, in this event, is the State Duma itself? It is a nonexistent agency, because under such a resolution Russia is a nonexistent state. There is no Soviet Union. And therefore the State Duma resolution has no legal or juridical base. You have destroyed something on which you yourselves are sitting." If the deputies continue to play tricks, they can be accused of a criminal offense — an attempt to undermine constitutional foundations.

It is not difficult to account for the discrepancy between the noise around the Communists' purely symbolic act and the significance of the event itself. The reason, of course, is the upcoming elections. In any event, Boris Yeltsin has good cause to say: "Incidentally, considering that this resolution was passed on the Communists' initiative, it could be assumed that they are thus trying to disrupt the presidential elections." This enables him, first, to suggest that the Communists are jittery because they are not confident in themselves; and second, to leave a safety margin against the eventuality that the elections will not take place for some reason. Furthermore, the Kremlin dwellers are certainly annoyed by the fact that the Duma has been effectively turned into an opposition election headquarters with an efficient apparat and modest — compared to the president's — but reliable technical capabilities.

Presidential Press Secretary Sergey Medvedev, condemning the Duma's irresponsible behavior, promised that in the next few days Boris Yeltsin will make a public statement. Presumably the president will hasten to calm his alarmed fellow citizens and the diplomatic world, giving assurances that he is still in office.

Russia: Zyuganov Criticizes 'Hotheads' Plan To Ban Duma Activities

LD1803205496 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 96

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] While political leaders abroad are recovering from the first shock, trying to make sense of what has happened, after the Duma revoked the Belovezh agreements, Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, has given journalists another shock by making the following statement.

[Begin Zyuganov recording, speaking to journalists] At any rate there are hotheads who are proposing to ban the activities of the State Duma, which is a legitimate body, and who are already trying to order the "power" ministries and departments to put their units on heightened combat alert and effectively to start imposing a state of emergency. If the president believes that the document violates the laws he has the constitutional right to go to the Constitutional Court. [end recording]

[Sharapova] After Zyuganov shared his fears with the public, political experts concluded that the Communists, aiming from the very start to force the authorities to take drastic measures, are evidently working on a reserve plan: if no drastic measures have followed, they at least have to pretend that they are about to be taken. The reaction of the president's entourage to the accusation that they are preparing what effectively amounts to a coup has been most concisely summed up by the president's aide, Georgiy Satarov. I quote: The

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Communists will never have such an election gift from the Kremlin. [passage omitted]

Russia: Primakov Speaks on Duma's Denouncement of Belovezh Accords

LD1803193396 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 96

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov today met his Greek counterpart. At a news conference at the end of the meeting, Primakov spoke about the State Duma's decision revoking the Belovezh agreements at the request of our correspondent Sergey Frolov.

[Begin Primakov recording] I think that the decision by the State Duma that you have mentioned is hitting Russia's international interests. First, Russia's current priority is the development of relations with CIS countries, rapprochement with these countries, and development of the integrational process. As for the Duma decision, it effectively wipes out the sovereignty of those countries. The question everyone raises is this: We want to keep the sovereignty we have gained; unification of supranational structures is possible, but while we preserve our sovereignty.

Second, we are often told this: Countries of Central and Eastern Europe want to join NATO because they are afraid of the restoration of the USSR as it used to be, and because they are afraid of the unpredictability of Russia's policies. The State Duma's decision now arms the supporters of NATO's expansion with additional arguments.

Third, the situation in the Baltic states is of special importance. The public opinion there is split: Some believe that it is necessary to join NATO while others believe that it is necessary to have normal relations with Russia and to preserve neutrality, etc. The State Duma's decision strengthens the positions of the former while weakening the positions of the latter.

Fourth, effectively undermining the legal basis upon which our state stands, this decision creates legal chaos in Russia's international relations. [end recording]

Russia: Yeltsin Aide Ryurikov Comments on Duma Resolution

LD1803142496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1403 GMT 18 Mar 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 18 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian President's aide for international affairs Dmitriy Ryurikov told a briefing in the Kremlin today that the State Duma's resolution denouncing the Belovezhye agreement market "the first step along the path leading to confrontation of powers."

According to the aide, the resolution passed by the lower house of parliament was "a show of strength, although a very dubious strength."

Of course, attempts at implementing that resolution can only lead to a disarray, and the authors of the resolution cannot but realise this. The main intention behind the resolution is "to show the world that nothing is quite simple in Russia, that there is a party in it which is ready to upset if not the whole world, then at least Russia."

According to Ryurikov, the aim of the authors of the resolution consisted in disrupting the process of integration in the Commonwealth of Independent States at a time when it is heading for a breakthrough.

The communists who drafted the resolution do not like any integration among independent, free states, he said. "Although, this integration is already underway, albeit at slower pace than within the framework of the USSR, it is based on different principles, principles of coordinated interests," Ryurikov stressed.

The Duma deputies do not want to put up with this approach. "But it is not clear in what way the Russian deputies want to contact their counterparts in the parliaments of other CIS countries in the future," Ryurikov said.

As concerns the international aspect of the problem, it is "even more serious," in the view of Dmitry Ryurikov. The State Duma resolution accomplished its main task — they sowed doubt about Russia being a reliable partner and a subject of international law," he said.

"A question will now be asked in the West about whether it is worthwhile to conduct negotiations with Russia, extend loans to it and sign contracts with Russians," Ryurikov surmised.

None of these questions arose before the State Duma passed its scandalous resolution, he stressed. The communists have achieved what they wanted: "the created chaos and confused the picture in order to facilitate their own grasp on power," he pointed out.

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Ryurikov stressed that the Duma resolution was very dangerous as a possible manifestation of far-reaching plans.

Asked about the expected "breakthrough" in integration within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Ryurikov said he had referred to the preparation of a number of documents concerning the deepening of integration for presentation to the leaders of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan for consideration.

According to Ryurikov, those documents would make it possible to solve numerous problems facing both private individuals and organisations in the three countries by boosting a considerable expansion of their cooperation in the social sphere, the economic field, and other areas.

Asked by Itar-Tass to specify whether he meant the creation of a "confederation" — a possibility which Boris Yeltsin did not rule out in his evaluation of the State Duma resolution — Ryurikov noted that it was not yet a prospect in question, although "an idea of that kind exists."

Commenting of today's statement by communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov alleging that the President's entourage is getting ready to use forcible methods in the struggle with the State Duma, Dmitriy Ryurikov declared, "I know nothing about such consultations but, in any case, it is not a method favoured by the President, and the President will not agree to any forcible steps."

Russia: Duma Decision Reveals CPRF Leaders' 'Impotence'

MM1903111396 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 1

[Article by Otto Latsis: "Zyuganovites Have Tightened the Reins but Still Have Not Saddled Russia. What the CPRF Faction Wanted To Achieve and What It Actually Achieved by the Decree Denouncing the Belovezhskaya Agreement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] They wanted to make people forget who ratified the treaty in December 1991. They achieved the opposite and memories of a half-forgotten episode surfaced. At Khasbulatov's request Zyuganov persuaded the Communists to ratify the agreement and he succeeded. So when he now claims that the democrats "intimidated us," it is hard to avoid the thought that it is all far simpler than that: The democrats intimidated you but you were cowards.

They wanted to pose as greater champions of the rapprochement of the peoples than Yeltsin. They achieved the opposite: By their contempt for the opinion of the 14 other components of the former Union they again repelled those who were ready for rapprochement. Thus they showed that they are prepared to sacrifice the prospect of real integration for the sake of a cheap pre-election stunt.

They wanted to pose as defenders of a great, 1,000-year old state. They achieved the opposite: They adopted a document which, had it possessed legal force, would have nullified the existing Russian state from the standpoint of international law with all the practical consequences that ensue from that.

They wanted to pin the blame for the destruction of the Union on Yeltsin again. They achieved the opposite: Once again they showed the world the imperial face of the Soviet bureaucrat whom the peoples of the former USSR actually rejected in 1991.

They wanted to win voters over with the prospect of the remarkable achievements that Russia can expect if Zyuganov wins the presidential elections. They achieved the opposite: They showed that their policy is defined not by an understanding of present and future realities but merely by a dangerously futile nostalgia for a past that can never return. The only thing that I do not understand is why, given such an approach, they should limit themselves to rewriting the historical facts of just four years ago. There was no obstacle to declaring simultaneously, for example, that the legal consequences of the defeat of ancient Rus in the battle of Kalka [31 May 1223] had lost force too.

They wanted to stop Yeltsin who was clearly scoring points in the election race. They achieved the opposite: They handed him a gift.

This is the first major political act of the present Duma's pro-Communist majority since taking their seats and engaging in some minor alignment maneuvers. This move was not made in haste but was promised back in December and not carried out until March. In that case why was it so unsuccessful in every respect? They did not even foresee the inevitable malicious commentaries on their well-known dislike of Gorbachev: After all, the logic of their decree obliges them immediately to take an oath of loyalty to the president of the USSR.

Some commentators have been conjecturing about subtle maneuvers against Yeltsin. But for some reason I am reminded of Griboyedov's immortal comedy and the tribute to Molchalin's professional qualities provided by Colonel Skalozub, the recognized authority on riding:

He tightened the reins. But he was a pathetic rider.

The professional qualities of the CPRF's present leaders were demonstrated extremely graphically in this episode which showed their utter political impotence. It is obvious that these people who are staking a claim to

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govern the country in its difficult hour are incapable of anything except political blather because they have never been responsible for any practical action in their lives. When people who do not know how to do anything except tighten the reins clamber into the saddle, calamity is in store.

Russia: Moscow Tightens Security as Antiterrorism Measure

LD1803181496 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 18 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast presented by Tatyana Mitkova]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the opinion of some analysts, today's statement by the leader of the Communist Party [of the Russian Federation] [Gennadiy] Zyuganov is pursuing the aim of enhancing the preelection actions of the Communists, hence the rumors about the possible dissolution of the State Duma.

Georgiy Satarov, [Boris] Yeltsin's aide, told ITAR-TASS that the Communists in the Duma will not be given such a present by the Kremlin for the presidential elections.

Perhaps Gennadiy Zyuganov was alarmed by certain signs of tighter security in the center of Moscow and the appearance at night of people in civilian clothes with dogs near the government buildings. But the power wielding structures have their own explanation for that. Here is a report by Nikolay Nikolayev.

[Begin recording] [Nikolayev] Moscow militiamen were unable to say how many times over the past 18 months the stepping up of their work regime has been announced. It has been known that a new order of that kind was received yesterday [17 March] at 2200.

The capital's main directorate of internal affairs [GUVD] explained the situation which has evolved very simply: The explosive device containing two kg of trotyl [a form of TNT] which was found on a bus on 17 March has forced the militia leadership to take the necessary security measures. [passage omitted]

[Vladimir Vershkov, head of the GUVD Press Service] We are realistic people with a certain experience and we can see what is happening in other European countries and not only in Europe. We realize that it is impossible to rule out acts of terrorism entirely because there are various means of carrying out terrorist acts, although I say once again that we are doing our utmost to ensure that this does not happen.

[Nikolayev] It is difficult to say what measures are being taken at the Lubyanka in turn. It is the counterintelligence department which has to combat terrorism. However, today, the federal security service had not heard anything about tightening the service regime here. The city militia now instructs all transport workers about the need to carry out periodic inspections of passenger compartments. [passage omitted]

[Vershkov] Every specific case, be it a hotel or any other public place, a cinema or theatre, has its own specific features. Staff on the spot, staff from the internal affairs department, the criminal service, and the public security militia are charged with carrying out all the necessary preventative work. Of course, I do not rule out simple observation or specific patrols of places where people gather in large numbers.

[Nikolayev] The ministry of defense building had not heard anything about stepping up the work regime of its ministry. The military think that the militia has enough forces to combat any criminal manifestation. So, to take Moscow's example, the actions by the power wielding bodies does not fit very well with the version which Gennadiy Zyuganov spoke of today. [passage omitted]

[Vershkov] I do not link that to politics, to any preelection struggle. I link that the concern and need for the law-enforcement bodies and militia — that is their main task — is to guarantee security, people's security. These are the assessment criteria. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Russia: Kalugin Responds to Criticism of Book

964F1452A Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian Mar 96 No 11, p 7

[Article by Major General of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Retired, Boris Solomatin; followed by interview with Major General, Retired, Oleg Kalugin by ARGUMENTY I FAKTY correspondent Dmitriy Makarov; place and date not given; published under the general heading: "Oleg Kalugin: Fighter Against Totalitarianism or Traitor?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **In connection with the recent arrest in the United States of the former military serviceman of the National Security Agency R. Lipke, who was charged with spying for the USSR, the question of the memoirs of Retired Major General Oleg Kalugin, published in New York in September 1994, and his work in the KGB First Main Intelligence Directorate flared up again. The Russian title of this book was "Farewell, Lubyanka."**

The way this book can affect the lives of people described in it is reflected upon by Major General of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Retired, Boris Solomatin:

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Fate arranged things in such a way that during 1965-1968 I was in charge of the KGB agents in Washington, that is, during the time when Kalugin was there, to which he devoted a separate chapter of his book. I must say that I knew from Kalugin beforehand that he was working on a book which he planned to publish in the United States.

Even before his book came out and I had read it, based on three years of working with him and fairly close personal communication, I assumed that he would consider it a special genre—a memoir of an intelligence worker—in which far from all of his past official activity could be spread out for general viewing. Kalugin's personal and professional qualities led me to think that: his natural intelligence, his good professional training, his erudition, and his ability to attract people to him.

I will say frankly that finding out about this book was, to put it mildly, an unpleasant surprise. I saw before me a report on the work of the Soviet intelligence agents in Washington over several years. It discussed the assignments set for the agents, the execution of these assignments, and their work methods. I was surprised by the fact that many important details published in the English version that came out in the United States under the title "The First Directorate" were "forgotten" in the Russian version of the book. I am analyzing the former version.

The book describes in even greater detail than, say, Gordiyevskiy, the operational activity of a specific group of agents and their agency. Incidentally, I am absolutely convinced that a member of the CIA or West European intelligence services could not have written such a "memoir" without criminal prosecution. I would not want to believe that by publishing secret information in his book Kalugin wanted to cause harm to Russia's national security. But what happened?

In my opinion, Kalugin has not passed the test of "fire and water." His early appointment to a high position and certain successes in his work over time led Kalugin to develop a pathological overassessment of himself. For, judging from the book, the entire intelligence service revolved around Kalugin. In the book he had practically not a single good word to say about his colleagues, unless you count a couple of references to the author of these lines and his friend Bakatin, who has now sunk as low as he can go by giving the Americans materials about unique KGB operating equipment. Judging from the book, all the rest of the people are boring and on their way out.

Throughout the book Kalugin is "hunting" his main enemy—Kryuchkov. I am not about to idealize Kryuchkov. Moreover, I agree with a number of the descriptions Kalugin gave of Kryuchkov. But that is not the point—one gets the impression that Kalugin wrote the book mainly to take revenge against Kryuchkov and other senior KGB officials.

No "hatred for the former criminal regime" (Kalugin's words) can justify his giving away state and professional secrets. Kalugin recently stated in an interview that the information about the agents given in the book "would not make it possible to identify them, even if 100 investigators were to try for 10 years." Is that so?

Here is a list of some KGB agents mentioned in Kalugin's book who, he thinks, cannot be personally identified:

1) The Norwegian ambassador in Washington who died in the United States in 1965. How many Norwegian ambassadors to the United States could have died in 1965? The answer is clear. If you want to know who it is, look in your diplomatic reference guide.

2) A senior diplomat (apparently an adviser or first secretary) of the embassy of one of the West European countries. He held leftist views. Before coming to the United States he had worked in Bonn. He continued to work for the KGB during the 1970's (after Kalugin left Washington). A check of official documents makes it possible to significantly narrow the group of senior West European diplomats who arrived from Bonn. The establishment by the FBI of any meeting between him and Kalugin would confirm the information contained in the book.

3) A female archivist of the embassy of a large European country who arrived in Washington from Moscow, where she had spent two years. With this information from Kalugin's book even the laziest FBI or CIA employee could determine who she is.

4) The ambassador from a large Arab country with whom Kalugin met over the course of a year and who left Washington in 1966. You could count the ambassadors of large Arab countries in Washington on the fingers of one hand. Especially if you know which of them left Washington in 1966 and, as people from the FBI probably know, met with Kalugin.

And finally regarding the "subject" of recent events, the soldier Lipke. Kalugin in his book, which came out, remember, in September 1994, writes about him: "For all I know he could still be a KGB agent working in the National Security Agency or the CIA." What did he know about Lipke in September 1994? And why does he now say he does not remember him.

Now read several recent statements Kalugin made in an IZVESTIYA interview on 1 March from the United

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States, where he is now. He thinks it "absolutely unacceptable to divulge any details of his former work which could entail suffering for those who for any reason previously worked with Soviet intelligence."

...I would like to conclude with an episode which, in my view, is extremely important for those who want to understand the motives for Kalugin's behavior. Not long before his discharge he met with KGB Chairman Kryuchkov to ask him to be transferred to another job. In particular he expressed the idea that he could be of the greatest advantage to the KGB in the post of leader of this department's news service. The appointment did not take place, although Kryuchkov said he "would think about it," and Kalugin was soon discharged. Attention is drawn to the fact that less than a year before his much publicized separation from the KGB, Kalugin was prepared to officially represent and defend the interests of this department. This raises a question about the sincerity of his statements to the effect that his conflict with the KGB was based on political leanings.

It is also interesting that after arresting Lipke, the American authorities referred for the first time to the information they had received from Kalugin. This might indicate that he is no longer needed, since everything possible has already been milked from him. I would not be surprised if the Americans force Kalugin to testify for the prosecution in Lipke's trial by threatening him with prosecution of himself for engaging in subversive activity in the United States.

Kalugin says in his book that he is proud of the courage he has acquired by breathing the free American air for 10 years. In fact, the writing of this book indicates no courage at all but a precise awareness of the impunity and the powerlessness of the Russian state to defend its own interests.

* * *

ARGUMENTY I FAKTY correspondent Dmitriy Makarov telephoned Oleg Kalugin in Washington, where is living at the present time, and asked him a number of very difficult questions.

[Makarov] Oleg Danilovich, people in the Foreign Intelligence Service are accusing you of exposing several Russian agents through your book. With the help of the FBI it is easy to identify both the senior diplomat from a European country and the female archivist, and especially the ambassador from a large Arab country, if only because of your meetings with him.

[Kalugin] In English there is this expression: to point your finger to the sky, which corresponds to our expression—you can look and look but you will never find what you are looking for. From the "directions" in my book you could look for Russian agents for many, many years and still not find them. For example, I met with the senior European diplomat not just on some corner but only in an official setting, the same as with the other people you mentioned. Many of the former Soviet agents are no longer working for us and others have died.

I see political motives in their attempts to accuse me of exposing Russian agents. They are being made by the same people who tried to put me in jail back in 1990. Now that they feel that the wind of change in Russia is blowing toward the past, they have crawled out of their holes.

The second reason they are trying to accuse me of treason is that the Russian intelligence leaders are trying to cover up their own blunders and criminal irresponsibility. Back in the 1980's the First Main Intelligence Directorate was called a branch of the CIA. Even then there were at least 20 people who had either fled to the West or were working for the CIA who were later sold out by Ames.

The simplest thing is to point the finger at me, a political opponent of the regime, as a traitor, and not admit their own mistakes.

[Makarov] But your "friends" in intelligence assert that you became a "political opponent of the regime" because of your personal hatred for Kryuchkov, who had deceived you several times by promising to promote you in the service and then never fulfilling his promises.

[Kalugin] Kryuchkov merely symbolized the old, dilapidated regime. He was the embodiment of everything that was bad and criminal in our leaders. But there were good people working in the KGB as well: Boris Aleksandrovich Solomatin, Vitaliy Konstantinovich Boyarov, Grigoriy Fedorovich Grigorenko, and, of course, Vadim Viktorovich Bakatin. They were among the high leaders of the KGB, but at the same time they were intelligent and decent people.

As for the promises of advancement in the service that were supposed to have been made to me by Kryuchkov, that simply could not have been. Back in 1987 I wrote a letter to Gorbachev (I quote it in my book) in which I warned him that unless there were radical reforms in the KGB, this organization would bury perestroyka and Gorbachev himself. Kryuchkov and Chebrikov were well aware of this, they were frightened by my letter, and therefore there could have been no talk of any advancement.

[Makarov] Let us return to the present. The whole brouhaha over your book broke out after the recent arrest of a senior KGB agent, U.S. National Security

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Agency soldier Lipke. The FBI referred directly to information obtained from you.

[Kalugin] You do not read the American newspapers. The FBI has been looking for Lipke since 1967. They used my book to provoke this Lipke into a confession. Although in my book I may have had in mind not Lipke but some other person. In my book I wrote that this person was still working for the Russian intelligence while sitting in the NSA or CIA, and Lipke had not been working there for a long time.

[Makarov] Are you not afraid that the American authorities will force you to participate in Lipke's trial as a witness for the prosecution?

[Kalugin] In the first place, I don't remember this case, and in the second place even if I did, I still wouldn't say anything. That is a matter of principle for me. I can condemn Kryuchkov and the regime, but when it comes to betraying people, excuse me, that is not my style. And if the KGB could not make me do something I did not want to do, it is not likely that the American authorities could. If worst came to worst, I would simply leave the United States.

[Makarov] Do you ever intend to return to Russia?

[Kalugin] Of course, my home is in Russia. Last October I signed a contract to work in the United States for three years. The elections are going on now and we are voting for either Yeltsin or Yavlinskiy, a good time to take a vacation. In the United States I teach in a university and work on things that have nothing to do with my past activity.

Incidentally, I can boast that, unlike my critics, I was able to get Russia $100 million in investments, which the American company AT&T has used to improve our telecommunications network.

[Makarov] Well, what if Zyuganov is elected?

[Kalugin] Then I will have to extend my vacation.

Russia: Poultry Industry To Receive Increased Allotment

LD1803164396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1413 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 18 (Interfax) — Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Zaveryukha has revealed investment plans for the domestic poultry industry.

"The Russian government is taking measures to boost domestic poultry farming. It will put 570 billion rubles into this sphere as credits at 25 percent interest, annually, to supply poultry farms with grain for the production of fodder," he told Interfax Monday. He also said that compared to 1995, allocations to poultry farming had increased by 270 billion rubles.

Zaveryukha does not link the Russian veterinary service's "well-justified and legitimate demands" concerning the quality of chicken quarters imported from the U.S. with measures to protect Russian poultry producers. He said, however, that the customs duties on poultry imports "have actually increased to 45 percent." Poultry supplies from Belarus, Ukraine and other CIS countries are not taxed at all, he said.

In protecting its own poultry farming, Russia "does not intend to cut poultry imports by regularly increasing customs duties," said Zaveryukha. He pointed out that alongside measures to boost Russian poultry farming, the government will take measures to enhance the competitiveness of the poultry produced in Russia.

The Russian Ministry of Agriculture and Food reports that Russia's poultry imports have increased 16 times over the past four years, rising from 50,000 tonnes in 1992 to 800,000 tonnes in 1995, while the production of meat in general (live-weight cattle and poultry taken together) decreased from 12.9 million tonnes to 9.4 million tonnes over the same period.

The stock of poultry at farms of all categories decreased from 568.2 million to 439 million birds in the period from 1992 to 1995, and from 378.3 million to 255 million at state agricultural enterprises over the same period.

Russia: Text of Edict on Downsizing Executive, State Organs

MM1803161096 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 5

[Russian Federation Presidential Edict No. 352, signed by President Yeltsin in the Kremlin, Moscow, on 9 March 1996: "On Reducing the Number of Staff at Federal Executive Organs and State Organs Under the Russian Federation President"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In fulfillment of Article 22 of the federal law "On the Federal Budget for 1996," I decree that:

1. The maximum number of staff at federal executive organs and state organs under the Russian Federation president shall be reduced to the levels set in Appendices 1 and 2.

2. Leaders of federal executive organs and state organs under the Russian Federation president shall immediately embark on the implementation of Paragraph 1 of

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this edict, ensuring that the staff released enjoy the social guarantees laid down by Russian Federation legislation.

3. The Russian Federation Government shall:

— in preparing proposals on the distribution of the federal budget expenditure on state administration laid down under Article 16 of the federal law "On the Federal Budget for 1996" envisage a corresponding reduction in the funds used to maintain the federal executive organs and state organs under the Russian Federation president listed in Appendices 1 and 2 to this edict, including the labor remuneration fund, with a view to ensuring the funding of expenditure linked to implementation of Paragraph 2 of this edict;

— submit proposals within one month on clarifying the labor remuneration fund for staff at federal executive organs and state organs under the Russian Federation president.

[Signed] Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin

[Dated] Moscow, the Kremlin, 9 March 1996
No. 352

Maximum Staff Numbers at Central Apparatus of Federal Executive Organs and State Organs Under the Russian Federation President [no "Appendix 1" notation as published]

Name of federal executive organ or state organ under the Russian Federation president	Maximum central apparatus staff size (excluding security and building services staff), units
Russian Federation Foreign Ministry	2762
Russian Federation State Committee for Military-Technical Policy	207
Russian Federation President's Committee for Computerization Policy	102
Russian Federation President's Committee on the Convention Problems of Chemical and Biological Weapons	68
Russian Federation President's State Technical Commission	151

Maximum Staff Numbers at Territorial Federal Executive Organs [no "Appendix 2" notation as published]

Name of federal executive organ	Maximum territorial organ staff size, units
Federal Inspectorate for Nuclear and Radiation Safety	1620

Military Issues

Russia: Grachev Comments on Chechnya, Resignation Rumors

LD1803210796 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 96

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today Pavel Grachev, in the presence of senior officials of the Defense Ministry, awarded Gold Stars of Heroes of Russia to 15 officers who fought in Chechnya. These are Russia's best sons, the minister said. They used their bodies to shield their comrades. They fought to release hostages and save civilians and were the first to fight bandits. They have done their very best to preserve Russia's territorial integrity. After the award ceremony ended, Grachev gave a brief interview to journalists, and in particular he spoke about the Army's actions in the forthcoming events aimed to finally settle the Chechen crisis.

[Begin Grachev recording] As he, the president, explained to people, from April onwards we will be gradually withdrawing from Chechnya our units and subdi-

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visions that are not involved in any special operations. [end recording]

Then the minister commented on the rumors on his possible resignation.

[Begin Grachev recording] I personally learn about my resignation from your publications, and even then rarely. The thing is that the president, who is my immediate boss, is the only person endowed with the right to dismiss or discharge me. Yet, we have good working contact. Every day I report to him. He has not dropped any hints about discharging me. It is another matter that somebody wants my resignation very much. But then I stated several times that I am not holding on to my seat. I carry out the task I have been given honestly, conscientiously, and as well as my experience and resources permit me. If this question is resolved some day, and it has to be resolved — after all I cannot stay in this post forever — it will be resolved by the president, not by media journalists, and most certainly not by NTV. [end recording]

Russia: Military Analyst Criticizes Attacks on Grachev

MM1803122396 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI Saturday Edition in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 8

[Interview with military analyst Colonel Nikolay Burbyga; place and date not given: "What Is Behind the Attacks on Pavel Grachev"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rumors of the Russian defense minister's "impending retirement" have become a customary feature in the country's political life. Like a chronic disease they grow worse with the advent of the latest public election campaign.

Last Sunday "Itogi" presenter Yevgeniy Kiselev cited competent sources and once again "discharged" the military minister. Viktor Chernomyrdin, chairman of the Russian Federation Government, was forced to issue the following statement: "I have no confirmation of the rumors of Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's impending retirement. I cannot understand the hullabaloo that the mass media have kicked up over him."

Military analyst Colonel Nikolay Burbyga commented on the situation specially for ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI.

[Burbyga] Yevgeniy Kiselev's statement is no mere rumor. Another campaign to discredit the military leadership has been launched, which will soon turn into anti-Army propaganda as a whole. And there is a subtle aim behind this. It is less a case of Pavel Grachev personally than his post. It is too much of a key post in Russia when political problems are being resolved. Intelligent Russians have probably noticed that the mass media attacks on Pavel Grachev coincide with election campaigns. The current attack on him is no accident. The presidential elections are drawing near and some people really want to take away one of the most reliable sources of support for the head of state's authority, namely the power structures.

One obstacle to this is the Army, which has already repeatedly demonstrated that it has upheld and will continue to uphold statehood and support for the president's reform course. In the current situation his adversaries, first and foremost the Communists, realize that if the Army cannot be won over to their side, an attempt must be made to neutralize it.

One means of achieving these aims is to force the president to carry out cadre reshuffles in the top echelons of the Defense Ministry leadership. Clearly, this will cause confusion among the troops and reshuffles from top to bottom, and will ultimately make the army organism unmanageable. Does the president want that on the eve of the elections? On the other hand, the opposition has an interest in that happening.

Let me add that it is not just the opposition but even some of "his own people" who are interested in discrediting the defense minister.

[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI] Why is that?

[Burbyga] In order to blame Pavel Grachev for Chechnya, all the problems associated therewith, and at the same time for Russia's finances, which have been sunk into this war. Any fairly knowledgeable person today realizes that Pavel Grachev is by no means the main protagonist in the Chechnya game and that people now want to make him the "fall guy." That is the custom in Russia.

[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI] Be that as it may, you often hear that Boris Yeltsin will win many votes by sacrificing Pavel Grachev on the eve of the elections.

[Burbyga] You can hardly considerably increase your electorate by sacrificing a defense minister these days. However, if we are talking about voters, the Army is the most tractable electorate, totaling over 10 million, if you count civilian personnel and Armed Forces veterans. I think that any presidential candidate would like to have those votes in reserve. Can one doubt that their choice in many respects depends on the stance taken by the Defense Ministry leadership?

[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI] Of course, but only if the defense minister is, say, universally beloved by his department. Today you often hear that Pavel Grachev

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is incompetent as a minister and unpopular with the troops....

[Burbyga] I think that the fact that the military, who have not been paid for two or three months, are at the same time obedient, tractable, and performing their combat tasks indicates better than any words how competent or incompetent he is as a minister. Perhaps that does not suit some people?

[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI] Among the main charges leveled at Pavel Grachev is the failure of reform within the Armed Forces....

[Burbyga] Your newspaper has frequently said that cheap but strong armies do not exist. A plant producing Zaporozhtsy [small car] cannot be ordered to make a Mercedes the next day. Investment in the plant is needed first. It is the same with the Armed Forces — reform cannot take place by waving a magic wand. Military reform is an extremely costly business and is a task for the whole people and the whole state. It must be begun by clearly deciding at state level what kind of Army Russia needs.

[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI] The defense minister is also reproached for the fact that our Army is virtually the one with the most "top brass" in the world. Is that true?

[Burbyga] To take a populist stance, that is true. But if you compare our army with those in the developed West, things look quite different. In Britain for instance the number of top brass represents 0.21 percent of the total Armed Forces. In France, which is planning to switch to a professional army, the figure is 0.15 percent. And in our country 1 January 1996 the "top brass" represented 0.1 percent of the total. But I must explain that these posts are often held by colonels who will only become generals in the future.

[ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI] To return to the shots shown on "Itogi", the defense minister looked extremely confused.

[Burbyga] I have long since noticed that many propaganda campaigns to remove various people from the political arena often start with their being discredited on "Itogi." You get the impression that, despite NTV's notorious independence, Zhenya Kiselev is just a mouthpiece for certain political forces. Last Sunday he carried out orders professionally, organizing his anti-Grachev piece in a dubious way. One should note that the "Itogi" presenter had no information to back up what he said. The pictures that he used in his program are also worthy of note. I am well aware of how they were filmed. Over a year ago Yevgeniy Kiselev asked Pavel Grachev for an interview. They met and had a conversation. After the "official" part of the interview, before leaving Yevgeniy Kiselev asked the defense minister to answer a few questions not for the program but to satisfy his "curiosity."

Pavel Grachev agreed, but asked that their discussion not be filmed. Yevgeniy Kiselev assured him that the camera was off.

The discussion soon became confidential. One of Pavel Grachev's major "shortcomings," unforgivable in a defense minister, is his excessive sincerity and openness, qualities for which he often pays. That happened this time. Some time later Pavel Grachev noticed that the camera was on and he once again asked the television reporter to switch it off. Yevgeniy Kiselev was not at all daunted and promised that these shots would not be aired. And he kept his word — only the official interview with the defense minister was shown on "Itogi" a year ago.

But a year later he showed the shots that had been filmed on the sly, on the quiet, so to speak. May this remain on the journalist's conscience.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Decree on 1991 Referendum on USSR

MM1803194896 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 3

[Undated draft decree of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma "On the Legal Validity for the Russian Federation-Russia of the Results of the USSR Referendum of 17 March 1991 on the Question of Preserving the USSR," signed by G.N. Seleznev, chairman of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma]

[FBIS Translated Text] Submitted by deputies who are members of the Committee for CIS Affairs and Ties with Compatriots and Deputy S.N. Baburin.

Confirming the desire of Russia's peoples for economic and political integration with the peoples of the states created on USSR territory, responding to numerous appeals from Russian Federation components, bearing in mind the results of the Republic of Belarus referendum of 14 May 1995, and with the aim of recreating state unity among USSR peoples in any mutually acceptable forms, the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma decrees:

1. The legal validity of the results of the USSR referendum on the question of preserving the USSR which took place on RSFSR territory 17 March 1991 is confirmed for the Russian Federation-Russia.

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2. It is noted that the RSFSR officials who prepared, signed, and ratified the decision to terminate the USSR flagrantly violated the wish of Russia's people to preserve the USSR as expressed in the USSR referendum of 17 March 1991, as well as the Declaration on the RSFSR's State Sovereignty, which proclaimed the desire of Russia's people to create a democratic rule-of-law state as part of a renewed USSR.

3. It is confirmed that the agreement to create the Commonwealth of Independent States of 8 December 1991, signed by RSFSR President B.N. Yeltsin and State Secretary G.E. Burbulis and not approved by the Congress of RSFSR People's Deputies — the supreme organ of RSFSR state power — did not and does not have legal force insofar as it relates to the termination of the USSR.

4. We proceed from the premise that the interstate and intergovernmental treaties and agreements on political, economic, defense, and other questions concluded within the framework of the agreement to create the CIS remain valid for the states that signed them pending their free and voluntary decision to recreate a single state or pending their decision to terminate the validity of the said treaties and agreements.

5. The Russian Federation Government is instructed to take the necessary measures to preserve a single economic, political, and information area and to develop and strengthen integration ties among the states created on USSR territory.

6. The State Duma delegation to the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly is to help to turn the Interparliamentary Assembly into an effective instrument for integration and cooperation among the states created on USSR territory.

7. Within one month Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma committees are to elaborate and submit to the State Duma Council for consideration a range of measures to eliminate the consequences of the USSR's disintegration, primarily in relation to its former citizens who have still not determined their state allegiance.

[Signed] G.N. Seleznev, chairman of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma
(Voting: for — 252, against — 33, five abstentions. The decree was adopted.)

Russia: Federation Council To Discuss Duma Resolution on Belovezh

LD1903070396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0555 GMT 19 Mar 96

[By Lyudmila Yermakova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 19 (ITAR-TASS) — The Federation Council upper house of Russian parliament meets today to discuss the Duma resolution of March 16 which proclaimed the Belovezh agreements null and void.

The Federation Council will discuss the issue at request from President Boris Yeltsin who pointed out that the questions touched upon by the Duma in its resolutions concerning the deepening of integration of the people united in the Union of SSR and on the legal force for the Russian Federation of the results of the USSR referendum of March 17, 1991 concerning the preservation of the USSR fall within the jurisdiction of the upper house of parliament in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

The leaders of the Federation Council who held a plenary working meeting on Monday stressed that it was necessary "to find a coordinated version of a way out of the situation."

The Federation Council will not act in the spirit of populism, "which some participants in the election campaign are trying to foster," Federation Council chairman Yegor Stroyev said.

Also today, the Federation Council will consider a package of laws already approved by the State Duma and hear government information about the execution of the federal budget in 1996, as well as about the measures taken by the executive to ensure the country's food security.

The upper house will also continue its organizational efforts relating to the structure of the newly-elected Federation Council.

Russia: Seleznev Statement on USSR Revival Decrees

MM1903093696 Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 19 Mar 96 p 1

["Statement by G.N. Seleznev, chairman of the Russian Federation Federal Assembly State Duma"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The two decrees adopted by the Duma "on intensifying the integration of the people who were united in the USSR and repealing the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet 12 December 1991 decree" and "on the legal force for the

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Russian Federation-Russia of the results of the 17 March 1991 USSR referendum on the question of retaining the USSR" are of a civil and political nature.

The deputies who voted for the adoption of these decrees have noted for nearly five years that the great Soviet Union was destroyed counter to the will of the people and with gross violations of the USSR Constitution. On behalf of all voters they have told the whole world that the three leaders of the former Union republics stole from them the country of which they were citizens — the USSR.

The State Duma decrees give no grounds for speculations about how someone intends to restore the former state by force. A sensible person understands that the will of the people and not of the rulers and parliamentarians is needed for a "divorce" or unification.

By their decrees the Russian State Duma deputies have given the president the opportunity to begin the process of his own political rehabilitation as one of the signatories of the unconstitutional Belovezhskaya Forest document in the eyes not only of Russians but also of all USSR peoples.

By their decrees the deputies are also untying the hands of the Russian Federation Government so that it can engage in earnest not in declarations but in specific actions to implement integration processes between the former union republics which are knocking on Russia's doors.

The State Duma has set an example to the parliamentarians of all countries demonstrating that it can reflect the will and mood of its voters.

Russia: Yabloko MP: Duma Hands NATO 'Real Trump Card'

LD1803175996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1413 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 18 (INTERFAX) — The Russian Duma has given NATO a "real trump card" for speeding up its expansion eastward by practically cancelling the 1991 accords abolishing the Soviet Union, Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs and member of the Yabloko faction, told Interfax in a Monday interview.

All attempts by the Russian government and parliament to halt the expansion have come to nought, he said.

"We will not achieve the goal called for by this paper tiger, but we will get troops standing on our borders," Lukin said.

Following a Communist Party initiative, Duma deputies voted on Friday to invalidate the Supreme Soviet's 1991 denunciation of the original 1922 law forming the USSR. They also voted that the 1991 referendum on preservation of the Soviet Union was legally binding. The resolutions drew harsh criticism from many of Russia's neighbors, and were called "provocational" by several leaders of former Soviet republics.

"These resolutions significantly harm the process of integration, as each move by Russia will be met with three times the suspicion," Lukin said, especially with reference to those states fearing "imperial ambitions, and so on."

"This deals both western countries (to protect those being threatened by Russian expansion) and eastern ones (the West must, finally, protect them) a trump card for the expansion of NATO," he said.

"Here, the Communists have just set us up," Lukin said.

Russia: Kulikov Tells Duma About Chechen Situation

LD1603110396 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0645 GMT 16 Mar 96

[From the "Parliamentary Week" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Friday the work of the State Duma's deputies proceeded in accordance with its new schedule — for the entire morning session the deputies listened to reports from the government. On 15 March Interior Minister Anatoliy Kulikov told deputies about the situation in the Chechen Republic.

[Begin recording] [Kulikov, at Duma rostrum] Any objective assessment of the present situation in the Chechen Republic requires one to describe it as extremely tense. It continues to develop in a way which is unfavorable for Russia's national security.

Dudayev and those around him regard the continuation of armed confrontation with the federal authorities as the only way to preserve their influence in Chechnya and, consequently, to preserve the possibility of satisfying their criminal interests. They are openly provoking a further exacerbation of the situation. They are trying to draw as many inhabitants of the republic and of other Northern Caucasus regions as possible into armed confrontation with the federal center.

In 1995 over 5,000 crimes were recorded in the Republic and about 4,200 of these were serious ones. The economic situation is critical. There is mass unemployment. Most people in Chechnya have weapons. All of this creates a breeding ground for the so-called professional bandits, of whom there are about 6,000. Some

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of them are prepared to commit any crime in order to keep the conflict going and preserve anarchy or, to be more accurate, the power of lawlessness, which makes it possible for them to continue their criminal activities.

It is quite to the liking of the Dudayev's supporters to have a return to the times in the distant past when the slave trade flourished. In order to obtain additional sources of income they are encouraging the practice of kidnapping people for later ransom. A price has been set for returning one person: they demand a ransom of about 25 million rubles. For this purpose the bandits have carried out a number of kidnappings of workers who have come to Chechnya from various parts of Russia to rebuild the economy. Currently they are holding about 150 workers. For individual servicemen being held captive they demand a ransom of up to 200 million rubles.

[Liberal Democratic Party of Russia leader Zhirinovskiy from floor of Duma, waving piece of paper and addressing Barynkin, first deputy chief of staff] Are you familiar with the document which says that the Chechen militants were paid $1.5 million for the operation at Gudermes? Not only is there an illegal war going on Russia's territory, but foreign states are interfering and encouraging separatists, militants, and so on. Are you considering closing the border with Azerbaijan? This border is constantly being used, day and night, to bring in weapons, new militants, and money.

[Viktor Barynkin, first deputy chief of general staff, speaking at Duma rostrum] As to support being given to the Dudayev regime by other states, we have reports on this from the intelligence services and appropriate measures are being taken. As to the question of closing the state border with Azerbaijan, this matter should not be addressed to us but to the Federal Border Service. [end recording]

Regional Affairs

Russia: Yeltsin's Far Eastern Supporters Form Coalition

MK1903090796 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Oleg Kryuchek from Khabarovsk: "Far Eastern Democrats Have Set Up a Coalition To Support Boris Yeltsin. Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's Representatives Are Not Taking Part in This Association"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Constituent conferences of blocs of democratic forces which intend to support Boris Yeltsin in the presidential election have been held in major cities of the Far East virtually at the same time. In Vladivostok, such a joint decision was reached by members of 12 political parties and public organizations. The most prominent of them, as regards the number of members and quality standards, are an affiliate of the "Russia Is Our Home" bloc, the Social Democratic Party, a branch of an international organization for human rights, and a public council under the Maritime Kray governor. Maritime democrats have unanimously decided to set up a bloc to support the present president and to register it at the legal department of the local administration as soon as possible so as to catch up with the Communists and Zhirinovskiyites, who have already launched an electoral campaign in support of their leaders.

In Kamchatka, "Boris Yeltsin's Public Council" — also a kind of political bloc in support of Mr. Yeltsin's candidacy — has been set up. It is noteworthy that Kamchatka representatives of Yegor Gaydar, Boris Fedorov, Vasiliy Lipitskiy, and Viktor Chernomyrdin have chosen not to wait until their Moscow patrons have it out and, as in Vladivostok, have virtually unanimously tied the future of Russian reforms with Boris Yeltsin. The above organizations were also joined by an affiliate of the "Memorial" society and representatives of the local Cossack okrug. Representatives of the "Yabloko" bloc did not wish to take part in "Boris Yeltsin's Public Council." Mr. Yavlinskiy's supporters do not want to join any democratic coalitions today — especially those upholding Boris Yeltsin — since, in their opinion, provincial democrats have compromised themselves by making up to the authorities as well as by being completely unable to organize or coordinate anything in the field of politics.

Russia: Nemtsov Says Communists May Ruin Russia Economically

LD1803210896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1638 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NIZHINY NOVGOROD, March 18 (INTERFAX-EURASIA) — A Communist rise to power may very soon result in the country's economic collapse, Governor of Russia's Nizhniy Novgorod region Boris Nemtsov told Interfax-Eurasia.

The Communists' inability to make balanced decisions was shown by the State Duma's latest decision to denounce the 1991 Belovezh Accords that disbanded the USSR and founded the CIS, Nemtsov said.

If a Communist government, in the event of its coming to power, behaves in the same way, the International Monetary Fund will stop disbursing loans and the Paris Club will no longer reschedule payments on foreign debt, Nemtsov said. As a result, Russia's currency accounts in foreign banks will be frozen, which will

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lead to a sharp rise in the dollar's exchange rate, he said.

Then, one can forecast that the Communists will introduce an artificially lowered currency exchange rate, stop imports of food to the country and reintroduce the well-known food rationing system as early as by the end of this year, Nemtsov said.

Nemtsov also said he believed that the creation of the Third Power coalition "will sharply decrease" Russian President Boris Yeltsin's chance of winning the presidential elections, but "will not increase Yabloko movement leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's chance."

This coalition's participation in the elections may result in Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov and Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy qualifying for the second-round runoff, Nemtsov said.

Russia: Vice Premier Zaveryukha Converses With Smolensk Farmers

MM1803162396 Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Arkadiy Glazkov: "The Regions Need Attention and Help!"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpts] Smolensk Oblast — High-level meetings are often held in Smolensk, which is now a border city. On this occasion, those gathered were representatives of Central Russia. You looked at them with a sinking feeling: This is the heart of ancient Rus! Now it is a great martyr bogged down in problems. How can it extricate itself? It cannot do it alone. Hence the appearance of the Central Russia Association, which, according to its president, Yaroslavl Oblast Governor Anatoliy Ivanovich Lisitsyn, is trying to resolve urgent problems through joint efforts. [passage omitted]

Vice Premier of the Russian Government Aleksandr Kharlampiyevich Zaveryukha took part in the Smolensk meeting. In the course of the discussion he answered questions that arose and stressed that a voluntary association of bodies of state power in Central Russia is in many ways conducive to the all-around socioeconomic development of the territories concerned in the conditions of a market economy. It makes more effective use of productive forces, natural, demographic, and other resources, and production capacity. The association can do a great deal to stabilize the socioeconomic situation in the region. A.Kh. Zaveryukha stressed that the Republic's [as published] government attaches paramount importance to state support for the regions and to interaction with interregional associations and components of the Federation across a broad range of activity.

Aleksandr Kharlampiyevich and a group of senior officials visited Rozhanovo near Smolensk, where a grain complex to serve private farms has been built from a Danish project and with the direct help of the Danish side; he highly appraised the results of this constructive cooperation between the two countries. The vice premier met with representatives of Smolensk Oblast's agro-industrial complex. The conversation immediately became heated. The people of Smolensk Oblast tried to convey to their immediate "curator" their great concern for the future of rural areas, and this concern was sometimes rather strongly worded. Well, what else can you expect? Life is very difficult for farmers these days, and feelings are running high. Zaveryukha's response was emotional, but considered. He agreed that the situation in agriculture is difficult, but the government's efforts to help farmers are producing noticeable results: The practice of leasing equipment is being fine-tuned, debts on centralized credits are being rescheduled, and the gross harvest of sunflower, sugar beet, potatoes, and vegetables has increased. But this has not stopped the ongoing crisis in farming: The number of livestock and poultry continues to wane, as does crop productivity and yield, for which Smolensk Oblast (among others) has been criticized.

The facts are well known. But what can be done? The vice premier believes that accumulated experience of reform, integration, and survival must be used; that, in addition to protecting Russian commodity producers, a food market should be formed; and that the social aspect of the reforms must be intensified. A great deal needs to be done to develop the network of wholesale markets.

How is the field work situation developing throughout the country as a whole? More than 1.5 million hectares of winter crops have been sown for the 1996 harvest, and more than 1.8 million hectares of land were plowed last autumn in readiness for the spring sowing. The government has adopted the Decree: "On Measures To Stabilize the Economic Situation of the Russian Federation's Agro-Industrial Complex in 1996," which provides for supplying petroleum products to agricultural producers and sugar refineries, fish feed [kormovaya ryba] to fur farms, and mixed feed to poultry plants — all on commodity credit terms. It also stipulates that mineral fertilizers and chemical crop-protection agents will be made available to agricultural units and poultry plants on favorable terms, plus subsidies for mixed feed.

Aleksandr Kharlampiyevich stressed that only real agrarian reforms and real state support can extricate the agro-industrial complex from the situation in which it now finds itself.

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Russia: Energy Supplies in South at 'Breaking Point'

MM1803161196 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Marlen Kryukov: "The Sun Is Higher, but There Is More Darkness"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Rostov-na-Donu — The energy sector in the south of Russia has reached breaking point, so to speak. This became particularly clear when the participants in an area conference of leaders of the vast region's governments, administrations, and energy-supplying organizations exchanged opinions in Pyatigorsk. They adopted an appeal to Prime Minister V. Chernomyrdin.

In it they noted that the state of affairs in the energy complex in the south of Russia "is on the brink of catastrophe" as a result of customers' failure to pay their bills. The debt of the region's consumers for heat and electricity constitutes a tidy sum of over 2 trillion rubles [R]. As of mid-February, consumers in Rostov Oblast alone owed the energy sector over R700 billion. Agricultural consumers and coal mining enterprises are constantly in debt.

Electric power stations are currently operating with practically no fuel reserves. Thus, the Novocherkassk State Regional Electric Power Station, which is experiencing tough times, is using up fuel as soon as it arrives. The high coal tariffs are aggravating the state of affairs. The collective did not receive any wages in the last three months of last year. The debt of the energy sector itself to the fuel suppliers exceeds R1.4 trillion. Equipment that is in working order is having to run at reduced capacity, as a result of which the power industry is being forced to disconnect customers, including solvent customers. The random automatic disconnection of customers could lead to casualties.

In their appeal, the participants in the conference urgently ask the prime minister to adopt immediate measures to extricate the energy complex from the crisis situation.

Russia: North Ossetia, Ingushetia Discuss Refugees' Return

LD1603191796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1856 GMT 16 Mar 96

[By Valeriy Shanayev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIKAVKAZ, March 16 (ITAR-TASS) — North Ossetia is doing everything possible to make the return of Ingush refugees to its Prigorodnyy district irreversible, North Ossetian Prime Minister Yuriy Biragov said after a closed-door meeting with Ingush government officials in Vladikavkaz on Saturday.

The meeting, which was chaired by Vladimir Lozovoy who heads Russia's provisional committee set up to cope with the consequences of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict, focused on ways to encourage the return of Ingush refugees to their homes in the Prigorodnyy district of North Ossetia, step up the construction of housing and every-day facilities in the region and promote reconciliation between the Ossetian and Ingush peoples.

According to Biragov, 1,300 Ingush families have already returned to the Prigorodnyy district. At present, over 13,000 Ingushis live in the Republic.

The return of refugees had been largely hindered by lack of funding for the construction of housing and social infrastructure which require about 500 billion roubles. However, only slightly more than 40 billion roubles have been allocated in the last two years.

Russia: Transcarpathian Pensioners Deal in Drugs

MM1803144496 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 16 Mar 96 p 1

[ITAR-TASS report: "'Narcogranny' Trades in Poppy Straw"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Every tenth drugs producer in the Transcarpathian Region is a pensioner. This became known to an ITAR-TASS correspondent at the local police administration's department for monitoring the illegal circulation of drugs. Since the start of the year alone the law enforcement organs have confiscated about 100 kg of lethal poison from "narcogrannies" and "narcograndads" in a number of rural rayons of the oblast. From just one 69-year-old woman from the village of Rativets rayon police department employees confiscated 26 kg of straw which she had prepared for clients. In Vinogradskiy Rayon the police confiscated from another gray-haired grandmother five kg of raw material ready for consumption and the equipment for preparing it. The owner admitted with tears in her eyes that the local gypsies had bought the goods from her for pennies and then resold it to clients.

The police do not know what to do with old people who violate the law in order to survive: After all, many people in rural rayons have not received their pensions since the fall of last year.

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Economic Issues

Russia: Latest Plan To End Wage Arrears Explained

MM1803171796 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 16 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Irina Savvateyeva on interview with Vladimir Petrov, Russian first deputy finance minister, date and place not given: "The Finance Ministry Is Confident That the Wage Arrears Will Be Settled Before 1 April"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a conference with regional leaders 14 March, Boris Yeltsin demonstrated the great potential of fiber-optic communications and his own excellent political form. At the same time the president showed yet again that given the political will the present authorities can even take a very creative approach to the solution to the long-standing and seemingly insoluble wages problem.

However, it is perfectly obvious that even such an exotic method as telephone conferences can be extremely ineffective if the treasury does not have the money to meet the president's promises. How far have these promises been backed up by real sources of income and careful economic calculations? IZVESTIYA asked Vladimir Petrov, first deputy finance minister responsible for the prompt payment of wages, to explain.

In order to comply with the president's instruction and settle the debts and current wage bill before the end of March, the deputy minister said, the Finance Ministry must allocate the following amounts of money.

First, 7.9 trillion rubles [R] for current wages financed from the federal treasury, R8.1 trillion for federal budget wage arrears, and R4.7 trillion which, according to the president's edict, is the sum due to be transferred to the Federation components and the local budgets to cover their wage arrears.

With certain provisos transfer payments to the Federation components could be added to that list. They are intended not just for the payment of wages, although a considerable proportion of them will be used for precisely that purpose. The current transfer for March therefore stands at R1.8 trillion, plus the accumulated federal budget debt under this heading of R1.7 trillion, which is also due to be paid in March.

Of course, the federal budget's March estimates did not include either the repayment of debts or the nearly R5-trillion gift to budgets at other levels. Where is the money going to come from?

Vladimir Petrov gave an immediate assurance on this: The government has no intention of borrowing from the Central Bank. "Even if we wanted to," the deputy minister commented, "[Central Bank chairman] Dubinin would not give us anything." Thus there remain two realistic sources of money — taxes and nontax revenue. However, there is a third, very specific source which could be added — the reduction of other items of expenditure. Those are the three directions in which the government is moving today.

As for the tax situation, it does not look very good at the moment. In the deputy minister's opinion, the tax payment situation is bad largely because enterprises stand to gain from allowing debts to build up until 15 March. According to the president's edict that is when the tax bodies will begin receiving requests for the deferral of enterprises' debts to budgets at all levels. And then, Vladimir Petrov is sure, the situation will change significantly because the deferral will operate only if enterprises begin paying current taxes on time.

The more stable receipt of budget payments, Petrov believes, will be helped by the abolition 1 March of concessions on the setting aside of wages [rezervirovaniye zarabotnoy platy] — the well-known "30 to 70" rule (or "20 to 80" according to the version of recent months).

Tax receipts should rise by the end of March, according to the Finance Ministry, also because the budget will receive extra sums of money as a result of the reassessment of enterprises' annual accounts that is going on right now. Long-term experience shows that when these reassessments have been carried out enterprises usually pay the budget quite substantial extra sums.

Similar receipts are expected in April-May, when the quarterly reassessments have been made and value-added tax is paid by small enterprises. It should also be borne in mind, Vladimir Petrov stresses, that there are more working days in March than in January or February. Consequently, the deputy minister believes, all the aforementioned sources will yield R2.5-3 trillion more by the end of this month than in the first two months of the year.

The Finance Ministry also expects to obtain above-plan sources of financing through increased efficiency in the work of the State Tax Service and the State Customs Committee. Additional targets of R3.5 trillion have been set for them. As an incentive to this work tax personnel are being paid their wage arrears before anybody else.

As for nontax receipts, the government is pinning great hopes here on revenue from the sale of state securities. The savings loan has yielded the budget around R1 trillion in March. The Finance Ministry is expecting to receive around an extra $2 billion from allowing

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nonresidents access to the short-term state bonds and federal loan bonds market.

Another reason why March was chosen as the breakthrough month is that at this time of year, according to Vladimir Petrov, the government has an "objective opportunity" to economize on other expenditure and use that money to pay wages:

This is the month when the heating season is approaching its end and the fuel bill falls. This is the month when the overland winter shipments to the north end and the shipping routes are still not open. The amount of money that has to be invested in agriculture this month is less than in April, August, or July.

Thus the Finance Ministry plans to save R1.5-2 trillion on investment, in the northern regions, and in the national economy.

In the interview for IZVESTIYA Vladimir Petrov rebutted the rumors that wages would be paid through sales from the state's gold reserves. In March, the deputy minister noted, considerable sums will be spent on funding gold extraction: The government will meet the January-February debts in this way. This means that the revenue remaining from the sale of gold will be insignificant: $60 million. This money is simply not enough to resolve the wage problem, Petrov noted.

When IZVESTIYA asked whether the payment of wages was not hindered by the need to pay for Chechnya, the deputy finance minister said that no additional expenditure was being set aside for the restoration work in the Chechen Republic. Around R400 billion will be spent on Chechnya in March: on subsidies to the Republic's budget, compensation for material damage, and clearing the debt to the construction industry.

Thus, Vladimir Petrov concluded, the government has a real opportunity to clear the wage arrears in March without upsetting the monetary program or fueling inflation at the same time. There are two deadlines in existence at the moment: one for the settlement of last year's debts, the other for the payment of the current wage bill. Both deadlines are being met on time, our interviewee assured us.

The deadlines have been set in such a way that a considerable proportion of the payments will be made at the end of March (for the objective reasons listed earlier). By the end of the month all the money due to the regions — transfer payments and presidential support of R4.7 trillion — will have been paid. Workers of budget-funded enterprises should receive their pay in March or early April, the deputy minister said.

Generally speaking after March, when the federal budget makes all the promised payments, the campaign for the prompt payment of wages will switch mainly to the regions. The heads of administrations will then be directly responsible for the wage situation. Protocols have now been signed with each of them clearly demarcating responsibility for the fulfillment of the president's edicts. Starting on Monday, Vladimir Petrov told IZVESTIYA, presidential aide Aleksandr Livshits will tell the press how much has been transferred to each region — "so that the people know that help is on its way." The Finance Ministry promises to monitor strictly the distribution and targeted use of budget funds.

Of course all the aforementioned measures can be applied only to enterprises which receive funds from budgets at all levels. "The president has no direct means of influencing owners of commercial ventures who do not pay their sales staff on time," Vladimir Petrov stressed, "although it does have indirect means, namely administrative methods." Recently, our interlocutor said, the Prosecutor's Office and the labor inspectorate have stepped up their activity considerably. Cases have come to light in which wages are not being paid even though there is money in the current accounts. Files relating to 76 enterprises which have broken the labor law have been handed over to the prosecutor's office so far.

Russia: Wage Arrears Directive, Commentary

MM1803094496 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 14 Mar 96 p 3

[Russian Federation Government 6 March 1996 Directive No. 329 followed by Commentary by Vladimir Kucherenko under general heading: "Repaying Wage Arrears"]

[FBIS Translated Text] With a view to eliminating arrears in the payment of wages to workers in the budget-funded sphere and salaries to employees of the internal affairs organs, students' grants, and allowances for children from the budgets of the Russian Federation components and also to toughening up control by the heads of executive power of the Russian Federation components over ensuring the promptness of these payments:

1. Agreement must be reached with the heads of executive power of the Russian Federation components on a package of measures for the unconditional paying off of wage arrears to workers in the budget-funded sphere, salaries for employees of the internal affairs organs, students' grants, and allowances for children for 1995 and January and February 1996 and for ensuring these payments in March 1996 and subsequently within the stipulated deadlines from the budgets of the Russian

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Federation components including determining when necessary the volume of temporary financial aid for these purposes using money from the federal budget.

This agreement must be carried out 11-12 March 1996 in accordance with the attached schedule [footnote] [not published].

2. The Russian Ministry of Finances must ensure:

the prompt provision of the necessary information and analysis materials for each component of the Russian Federation to examine the questions indicated in point 1 of this directive;

the extinguishing in March 1996 of federal budget arrears in paying money from the Federal Fund for financial support for the Russian Federation components.

3. Decisions on rendering additional financial aid to the Russian Federation components to extinguish wage arrears to workers in the budget-funded sphere and salaries to employees of the internal affairs organs, students' grants, and allowances for children using funds from the federal budget are made on the basis of the results of agreement. In this connection previously made decisions for additional financial support for individual components of the Russian Federation for these purposes using federal budget funds become invalid.

[Signed] V. Chernomyrdin, chairman of the Russian Federation Government, Moscow.

Postscript to Document

Wages arrears have now become a scourge for the country. Those who work for the state — the budget-funded employees — are in a particularly unenviable position.

Wage arrears will be paid from the federal budget throughout March. But if we take the budget sphere here the main debtors are the Russian Federation components' budgets. Labor Minister G. Melikyan asserts that they were holding back about 1.5 trillion rubles [R] by the middle of January. According to his department's figures this has happened despite the fact that in 1995 the Russian Federation components received aid from the federal treasury. Here in some regions salaries for budget-funded workers have not been paid even when there were funds left in their budgets.

So the central government had to intervene. In fulfilling the president's edicts "On Measures To Ensure the Prompt Payment of Wages From Budgets of All Levels and of Pensions and Other Social Payments" (19 January 1996) and "On Checks on the Observance of Legislation on Wages" (19 February 1996) the Russian Labor Inspectorate in conjunction with the tax services conducted 208 checks on budget-funded organizations from 20 through 27 February.

And in Adumurtia for one it was suddenly found possible to issue health workers with R1.5 billion and teachers with R10.3 billion. The property of the Kursk nuclear electric power station had only to be sequestered for its workers to be paid R11.3 billion. And in Orel Oblast, V. Varov, Russian Federation chief state labor inspector asserts, of the R3.86 billion earmarked for wages for education workers R2.35 billion had gone to buy fertilizers and fuel and to pay subsidies for hemp.

To a considerable degree, the Russian Labor Inspectorate notes, the complex situation has taken shape because by 10 September 1995 the Russian Federation Ministry of Finances had fully financed all the debts of the central treasury for the sociocultural sphere. But here it had failed to consider the Russian Federation Government Decree No. 823 (of 24 August 1995) on increasing salaries and wages 54 percent in September. Actually, is it worth blaming the "cashier" for everything when funds constantly fail to reach the treasury? After all, there is a raging nonpayments crisis and industry has switched to exchange trade — to barter, with which you can pay neither wages nor taxes.

Today virtually all problems come down to the question of the state's efficiency as a collector of taxes and a controller. Why are our budgets full of holes? Not least because taxes are taken mainly from those who produce. The murky world of various flea markets, casinos, and large financial structures, closely linked with crime, avoids taxes.

Has the time not come for us to stop paying out for ourselves and "those boys," subsidizing their easy life and, like slaves, providing their private residences and limousines at the expense of the army, science, culture, and education?

Funds are lacking in the treasury and clashes between departments begin. The federal administration for bankruptcy cases and the Ministry of Fuel and Energy have attacked the Defense Ministry. They say that in 1991-1995 it spent one fifth of its budget on payments to the fuel and energy complex but this year it plans to spend only 3.9 percent, or R1.6 trillion. While it should at least give R12.5 trillion. At the same time the proportion of wages has increased drastically in Defense Ministry expenditure — from 6 percent to 16.5 percent. The money must be redistributed, they say.

Reducing the servicemen's wages means dooming them to hunger and pushing them into extremism. Tell a boy risking his life in Chechnya for half the wage of an

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impoverished stall holder that he is getting too much! But the Ministry of Fuel and Energy also has its own logic: After all, it must somehow maintain its sector's exhausted economy. It is collapsing without funds — and what awaits us all?

We can also ask: But has the Ministry of Finances done everything to find funds for wages for the far from rich workers in our budget-funded sphere and has it not itself lost money from the treasury? To judge by the report delivered by Russian Federation General Prosecutor Yu. Skuratov at the government 7 March session, the Ministry of Finances has become involved with loans from commercial banks because of which the state was later obliged to repay them debts at a high interest rate.

As the general prosecutor stated 13 September 1995, A. Chubays at the proposal of Finances Minister V. Panskov enlisted commercial banks to finance the Defense Ministry, taking a loan of R1.3 trillion from them. From "Vozrozhdeniye" alone R400 billion was taken at a rate of 120 percent per annum.

S. Aleksashenko, deputy chairman of the Central Bank, asserts the Moscow City Hall long ago moved the city budget to commercial banks. The capital's tax police and the state customs committee have accounts there, for instance.

The General Prosecutor's Office believes the banks' "piracy" to be one reason for the destabilization of the situation in the country because they are holding up the payment of money into and out of the budget. Sometimes for up to a year.

As an example it cited Dagestan's "Yulduz" which has paid only R799 million out of R2.2 billion in wages, depriving the entire city of Buynaksk of wages, and the Novokubansk branch of "Kazakbank" which released R13 billion not for the purchase of wheat but for something completely different.

So the prosecutor's office is demanding the repeal of the government credit commission's illegal decision, the return of budget accounts to the Central Bank structures, and the intensification of control over commercial bankers. Because many of them have on their consciences the misfortunes of those who are forced to endure poverty for months on end without the money they have earned honestly

We cannot allow people to become "slaves" either to bankers or to administrators of any level or to rogues who avoid taxes. The government's recent directive takes a step in the struggle against an ugly phenomenon of our days. But more is needed. Above all the consolidation of the state's effectiveness. Without that it is impossible to pay wages, collect taxes, or boost the economy. And last year's debts paid today will result in debts in 1996.

Russia: Text of Decree on Budget-Sphere Wages

MM1803110796 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 13 Mar 96 p 6

[Russian Federation Government Decree No. 230 signed by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, Moscow, 6 March 1996 "On Measures To Implement the Russian Federation President's Edicts Aimed at Ensuring the Prompt Payment of Wages to Workers in the Budget-Funded Sphere," followed by list of members of the Government Commission for Questions of Wages in the Budget-Funded Sphere]

[FBIS Translated Text] To ensure the unconditional fulfillment of the Russian Federation president's Edict No. 66 of 19 January 1996: "On Measures To Ensure the Prompt Payment of Wages from Budgets at All Levels, Pensions, and Other Social Payments" and Edict No. 134 of 1 February 1996 "On Some Additional Measures To Ensure the Prompt Payment of Wages to Workers of the Budget-Funded Sphere," to clear the federal budget arrears in the payment of wages, the pay of servicemen and staffers of the internal affairs organs, pensions, grants, allowances, and other social payments, and subsequently to ensure their prompt payment in full using the funds of budgets at all levels, the Russian Federation Government decrees that:

1. Officials of the federal executive organs charged with the task of the payment of wages directly from the federal budget as well as of the allocation from the federal budget of resources used to pay the wages of workers of organizations in the budget-funded sphere, the pay of servicemen and staffers of the internal affairs organs, pensions, grants, allowances, and other social payments (hereafter known as wages and other payments to the population from budget funds) who are guilty of delay in the aforementioned payment or allocation of resources from the federal budget shall bear personal responsibility in accordance with the Russian Federation president's Edict No. 66 of 19 January 1996: "On Measures To Ensure the Prompt Payment of Wages From Budgets at All Levels, Pensions, and Other Social Payments."

2. Each month the Russian Federation Finance Ministry is to draw up and supply to the federal executive organs timetables approved by the Russian Federation Government for the funding of wages and other payments to the population from budget funds envisaged by the Russian Federation president's Edict No. 66 of 19 January 1996: "On Measures To Ensure the Prompt Payment of Wages From Budgets at All Levels, Pensions, and Other

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Social Payments" three days before the start of the following month. The aforementioned timetables are to be drawn up strictly in accordance with the 1996 federal budget. The federal executive organs shall, within three months of receipt of the corresponding figures from the Russian Federation Finance Ministry, draw up timetables for the funding of wages and other payments to the population from budget funds, shall deliver them to subordinate establishments and organizations, and send them to the Russian Federation Finance Ministry Main Administration of the Federal Treasury.

3. The Russian Federation Finance Ministry shall:

a) when determining the amounts of funding in March 1996 in accordance with the 1996 federal budget take account of the settlement of the arrears for wages and other payments to the population from budget funds which accrued in January 1996;

b) within one week submit to the Russian Federation Government proposals on clearing the federal budget arrears for wages and other payments to the population using budget resources formed for 1995.

4. Ban the federal executive organs from submitting to the Russian Federation Government proposals on the introduction in 1996 of new conditions of labor remuneration and on increasing the numerical strength which will involve extra spending from the federal budget for 1996.

The executive organs of the components of the Russian Federation are instructed to adopt similar measures.

5. The Russian Federation Labor Ministry together with the Russian Federation Finance Ministry and the Russian Federation Justice Ministry are to draw up proposals on rescinding or suspending normative legal acts adopted in 1996 on questions connected with changing the labor remuneration conditions.

6. The Government Commission for Questions of Pay in the Budget-Funded Sphere is to be formed and its composition approved according to the appendix attached.

7. It is established that the Government Commission for Questions of Pay in the Budget-Funded Sphere shall:

examine the weekly timetables for the funding of wages and other payments to the population from budget resources as submitted by the Russian Federation Finance Ministry and issue the corresponding instructions on these questions;

hear reports from leaders of the federal executive organs and the executive organs of the components of the Russian Federation on ensuring the payment of wages and other payments to the population using budget resources;

resolve questions connected with making officials who are to blame for delays in the payment of wages and other payments to the population from budget resources accountable in the prescribed manner and submit the corresponding proposals;

examine appeals by leaders and officials of the executive organs of the components of the Russian Federation on the provision of federal budget assistance for measures connected with the payment of wages and other payments to the population using budget resources on condition of the presentation of materials on the use of resources previously allocated from the federal budget for these purposes and submit in the prescribed manner proposals on measures necessary for the solution of these questions;

examines proposals on the routine indexation of wages;

drafts proposals on identifying sources of finance for the payment of wages and other payments to the population using budget resources and the improvement of settlements and payments discipline in this sphere.

8. To establish that until the normalization of the situation regarding the payment of wages the Government Commission for Questions of Pay in the Budget-Funded Sphere will meet twice a month with the participation of representatives of the trade unions.

[Signed] V. Chernomyrdin, chairman of the Russian Federation Government.

Composition of the Government Commission for Questions of Pay in the Budget-Funded Sphere

V.V. Kadannikov—first deputy chairman of the Russian Federation Government — chairman of the commission,

V.A. Petrov—Russian Federation first deputy finance minister—deputy chairman of the commission,

G.G. Melikyan—Russian Federation minister of labor—deputy chairman of the commission,

Ye.V. Tkachenko—Russian Federation education minister,

Ye.Yu. Sidorov—Russian Federation culture minister,

A.D. Tsaregorodtsev—Russian Federation minister

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of health and the medical industry,

L.F. Bezlepkina—Russian Federation minister of the social protection of the population,

V.I. Davydov—Russian Federation deputy general prosecutor (co-opted),

V.V. Gusev—leader of the Russian Federation State Taxation Service,

S.N. Almazov—director of the Russian Federation Federal Tax Police Service,

V.K. Varov—leader of the Russian Federation Labor Ministry's Federal Labor Inspectorate,

P.P. Mostovoy—leader of the Russian Federation State Committee for the Management of State Property Federal Administration for Insolvency (Bankruptcy),

A.S. Kruglov—chairman of the Russian Federation State Customs Committee,

V.V. Barchuk—chairman of the Russian Federation Pensions Fund,

Ya.M. Urinson—Russian Federation first deputy economy minister,

S.V. Aleksashenko—first deputy chairman of the Central Bank of Russia (co-opted),

V.N. Shcherbak—Russian Federation first deputy minister of agriculture and food,

V.A. Durbazhev—Russian Federation deputy minister of internal affairs,

V.M. Toporov—Russian Federation deputy defense minister,

I.Yu. Rybakov—deputy chief of the Russian Federation President's Control Administration (co-opted),

A.Yu. Petrov—chief of the Russian Federation Government Apparatus Department of Finances, the Budget, and Money Circulation,

N.I. Cheshenko—chief of the Russian Federation Government Apparatus Department of Labor, Health, and the Social Protection of the Population,

and V.G. Zaytsev — deputy chief of the Russian Federation Finance Ministry Main Federal Treasury Administration—executive secretary of the Commission.

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International Affairs

Ukraine: U.S. State Secretary Christopher Arrives in Kiev

LD1903114696 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Kiev on a one-day working visit today. At Borispol airport, which was decorated with the U.S. and Ukrainian state flags, the lofty guest was met by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko and other officials. Talks between Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher have just taken place at the Mariyinskyy Palace. Meetings with Supreme Council Chairman Oleksandr Moroz, Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk and Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko are also planned. Warren Christopher is to visit a scientific treatment association for mother and child care.

Ukraine: U.S. Ambassador's 18 Mar News Conference Reported

WS1903094596 Kiev UKRINFORM in English 0833 GMT 19 Mar 96

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Speaking at a briefing for Ukrainian and foreign journalists in Kiev on Monday, March 18, U.S. Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to Ukraine William Green Miller reaffirmed the U.S. Administration's unswerving and unqualified commitment to Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity. The briefing in Kiev was held on the eve of U.S. State Secretary Warren Christopher's arrival in Kiev slated for Tuesday, March 19. As the US envoy reminded the journalists when Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma met with US President Bill Clinton, Vice-President Al Gore and other high-placed U.S. officials in Washington, DC, an agreement was reached on continuing such visits making them regular. Mr. Christopher's upcoming visit to Kiev will be in keeping with that decision on continued exchanges of opinions between the two countries' top officials. The U.S. Secretary of State will meet with President Kuchma, Verkhovna Rada [Supreme Council] Chairman Moroz, Prime Minister Marchuk and his Ukrainian counterpart Udovenko, the U.S. Ambassador said. Replying to the journalists' questions Mr. Miller said that the U.S. Administration's growing interest to Ukraine could be explained by the fact that Ukraine is second largest nation in the former Socialist Camp. Besides, Ukraine's geographic position is strategically very important, which complements political considerations behind the U.S. Administration's support for Ukraine, which may be accounted for emotionally, too, since the people of Ukraine is striving for a democratic society and is in need of help, which the USA cannot disregard because of its own past history. According to the U.S. Ambassador, a package of documents will be discussed during Mr. Christopher's visit to Kiev involving G7 aid to Ukraine with a view of alleviating the Chernobyl aftermath. Replying to the journalists' questions about the US Administration's reaction to the Russian State Duma's resolution to revoke the CIS Treaty, Mr. Miller said that this issue could not but attract universal attention as affecting too many nations. As Mr. Miller said, he discussed the matter at the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine and with other high-placed Ukrainian officials, as he had to learn the host nation's response. Besides, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his entourage have been quite explicit on the matter. According to the U.S. Ambassador, his talks with President Kuchma and Prime Minister Marchuk showed that Ukraine's leadership tends to view the Russian State Duma's resolution as a fact, which cannot alter Ukraine's status of a sovereign and independent nation. The USA is interested in goodneighborly relations between Russia and Ukraine as influencing the entire region's stability.

Ukraine: NEW YORK TIMES Report on Arrest of U.S. Citizens Cited

WS1803152896 Kiev VSEUKRAINSKIYE VEDOMOSTI in Russian 14 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Two U.S. Businessmen Are Accused of Handing Over Secret Military Information to Ukraine and Russia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As THE NEW YORK TIMES reported in its 6 March issue, two managers of the Electrodyne Systems Co., which produces electronic equipment for military planes, ships, and satellites, have been arrested in the State of New Jersey (the United States).

The two U.S. citizens — Dennis Natan (former Iranian citizen) and Victor Lander (former USSR citizen) [names as transliterated] — have been accused of illegally transfering secret blueprints of naval radar systems, missile guidance systems, and flight monitoring systems to several Ukrainian and Russian defense plants.

The arrested men are not accused of espionage and causing deliberate damage to the U.S. interests, THE NEW YORK TIMES clarifies. However, the company did not have a license to ship secret documents outside the U.S. borders.

Since the late 1980's, Electrodyne Systems has received hundreds of Pentagon contracts, according to which

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all of the company's products had to be manufactured domestically. Electrodyne Systems violated this agreement, however, and hired subcontractors in Ukraine and Russia, concealing this fact from the U.S. Government. Production was already arranged at some companies in these countries, and products were illegally exported to the United States. The paper does not specify which Ukrainian and Russian plants were the contractors for Electrodyne Systems.

Ukraine: Kuchma Supports Yeltsin on Duma Decision on CIS

LD1803195696 Kiev UT-1 Television Network in Ukrainian 1900 GMT 18 Mar 96

[No video available]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ukrainian president's press office has reported that President Leonid Kuchma sent a telegram to Russian President Boris Yeltsin today following the decision by the Russian State Duma, which in fact revokes the Belovezh Pushcha agreements. In particular, the telegram emphasizes that the head of the Ukrainian state supports in every way the resolve of Boris Yeltsin, as the guarantor of abidance by the Russian Constitution, to do everything necessary to preserve Russian statehood and continue democratic reforms in the Russian Federation.

Ukraine: Officials Refuse Comment on Kuchma Election Funding Report

WS1803095196 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0052 GMT 18 Mar 96

[By Oksana Hasyuk and Denys Pavliv, "Special To INTELNEWS"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 17 — Ukrainian officials have refused to comment on Russian media reports that President Leonid Kuchma's 1994 election campaign was financed by the Russian government.

The Russian newspaper KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, citing documents from Russia's Presidential Control Service, said that about $100 million in oil export revenues was diverted to the Kuchma campaign shortly before the first round of the presidential election in which he unseated incumbent Leonid Kravchuk, calling for closer ties with Russia.

According to the newspaper, the information was confirmed by former acting Russian Prosecutor General Aleksey Ilyushenko, who is awaiting trial in Moscow's Lefortovo prison on corruption charges stemming from his handling of the exports.

The Russian Presidential Control Service documents reportedly state that on May 6, 1994, the International Center for Development Industry, Information and Business [PromInformBiznes], a private corporation, asked Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, to allocate an export quota for 2.5 million tons of oil.

On May 25, 1994, according to the report, a Russian governmental commission headed by now-First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, gave permission to exempt the exports from customs duties. The $100 million earned from the deal was allocated to the Kuchma campaign by the Russian government, according to the report.

Presidential spokesman Serhiy Kutsiy refused comment, saying Friday that "neither me, nor any other official will say anything, because nobody gave instructions to comment on this publication." He added that "Ukraine's Embassy in Moscow is investigating the causes of the incident."

However, Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuriy Serheyev asked about the embassy investigation, said that he "doesn't comment on anything which is connected with President [Kuchma]."

Ivan Makar, a former member of Ukrainian Parliament who edits OPOZYTSIA [Opposition] newspaper, said that when the Russian Embassy in Kiev organized a banquet in honor of Kuchma's victory, a Russian diplomat told him at the time that the "Russian treasury won't endure another election in Ukraine."

"Kuchma isn't a politician, he is the protoge of capital, mainly Russian," he added.

Ukraine: 'USSR Officers' Congress Reported

WS1803132696 Kiev VECHIRNIY KYYIV in Ukrainian 13 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

["Minutes" from the Congress of USSR Officers held in Moscow on 23-25 February: "Red Threat Is Coming From Russia; Ukraine Watch Out!" — title and first two paragraphs are in Ukrainian; rest of text is in Russian]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Our editorial office has obtained analytical documents from a Congress of USSR Officers held in Moscow recently. Considering the importance of the documents, the sort of sensational information contained in them, the editorial office decided to make them public, without any commentary.**

Read them, contemplate them, and draw your conclusions.

Events connected with the Congress of USSR Officers were held in Moscow from 23 February to 25 February.

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The organizational committee began its work on 23 February at 1000 in the morning. Heads of delegations of officers' organizations from the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Belarus, the Transdniester Region, Moldova, Lithuania, Estonia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Abkhazia participated in the work of this committee. Generals A. Lebed, A. Makashov, V. Achalov, V. Varennikov, and A. Sterligov, as well as leaders of the Russian Communist Party faction in the Russian State Duma, and "Working Russia" Party Chairman V. Anpilov took part in the meeting of the organizational committee. Russian Communist Party Chairman Gennadiy Zyuganov was the most important figure at the meeting of the organizational committee. In addition, a number of generals and senior officers from the Russian Defense Ministry and the Defense Ministry General Staff were also present.

The organizational committee endorsed a decision addressing the participation of delegations in a rally devoted to the Soviet Army and Navy Day. The rally was held on Lubyanskaya Square at 1630. No less than 50,000 participants took part in it. Some 25-30 percent of participants in the rally arrived in their military uniforms. According to an assessment by independent analysts, it was the first time over the past six-year period when such a large number of servicemen assembled under red banners.

Russian Communist Party Chairman Gennadiy Zyuganov, who delivered a speech at the rally, said that communists have established close contacts with the Army; he said the presence of a great number of servicemen at the rally proves this. Certain officers who participated actively in the meeting took off — as a deliberate protest — double-headed eagles from their caps and threw them under their feet, followed by approvals of the crowd.

No incidents occurred during the meeting. Obviously, the police sympathized with the participants in the rally, made contacts with them eagerly, and took their propagandistic publications, which — some 40 various communist and patriotic publications published on a high-quality paper — were made available en masse and free of charge to all those interested.

After the meeting, Lieutenant Colonel S. Terekhov, chairman of the Russian Federation Union of Officers, and General A. Makashov invited the heads of military delegations for dinner in the ZIL concern hotel. During the dinner, Colonel General A. Makashov reported on the state of affairs in high echelons of the Russian Defense Ministry and the General Staff, where Boris Yeltsin's close entourage was establishing — in frantic haste — the "Praetorian" guard, whose striking force will be the 27th Detached Brigade of Special Purpose Battalion ([stationed in] Teplyy Stan borough) and a Detached Assault Battalion of Quick Reaction ([stationed in] Sokolniki borough). Ninety percent of the Armed Forces staff — including the commanders of arms of services and of military districts — expressed their open discontent with the disastrous state of the Army and its upcoming collapse. Today, Russian President Boris Yeltsin can trust only 5-7 percent of high-ranking generals out of the total number of generals with whom he came to power. There is no unity among the top leadership of the Russian Defense Ministry: So far, several groups have been formed which are oriented toward various political forces.

P. Grachev's group consists of over 75 generals and senior officers of the Russian Defense Ministry and the General Staff and of 250 servicemen in troops. They are mainly Grachev's comrades-in- arms. Lately they have been frantically establishing contacts with the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia. D. Kharchenko (Grachev's brother), K. Kobets, and main political adjutant S. Zdorikov are the primary ideologists of this group.

M. Kolesnikov's group includes his deputies and Main Intelligence Directorate Head F. Ladygin. Being high-level experts, they are pursuing a policy of neutrality and will merge with the Russian Communist Party, if it wins.

Kokoshin's group is oriented toward the military-industrial complex and toward Oleg Lobov. It is particularly threatening, being linked to the "new Russians."

In the Russian Defense Ministry, there is a large segment of politicized generals who are openly cooperating with political parties and movements. Airborne Troops Commander Ye. Podkolzin and G. Kondratyev exercise the greatest influence on the troops today. Ye. Podkolzin is closely linked to General A. Lebed and — if unexpected events occur — he will support him. General Staff Academy head I. Radionov, and Generals L. Rokhlin and B. Gromov have begun to deal with politics directly. It is not excluded that B. Gromov will run for the Russian presidency.

The current situation in Russia considerably differs from the situation in 1993. Already now, communist and patriotic publications are being distributed to the troops without any restrictions. The Army will no longer fulfill the orders of the antinational system implicitly. If the Kremlin launches any anticonstitutional measures, the most politicized portion of the Army (the Airborne and the Ground Troops) may become unmanageable. This disobedience is most probable in the Baykal Military District in the Far East, the Siberian Military District,

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and in the Volga Region, the so-called "red belt." The Army will become a sizable reserve of communist forces, particularly in conditions of potential dyarchy.

The congress was held in the "Moskvorechye" Palace of Culture. One hundred seventy two deputies from all 42 military districts of Russia and from the CIS countries (six generals, 24 senior officers, and 42 junior officers of whom 73 percent are cadre officers) were present. Representatives of the Communist and other patriotic parties, movements, and public organizations of Russia and Belarus (186 representatives) were also invited to participate. The work of the congress was covered by journalists from 38 mass media organizations.

S. Terekhov, A. Lebed, A. Makashov, V. Ilyukhin, B. Ivanov, A. Bezporodov, P. Romanov, and V. Anpilov delivered the most interesting reports at the congress.

The primary content of A. Lebed's report was as follows: To create a powerful Russian Armed Forces, we need some four to five years. Then we will be able to instill order not only in the Caucasus, but all across the post-Soviet territory.

The primary content of V. Anpilov's report was as follows: It is much cheaper and simpler to restore the USSR than to ruin it. To achieve this, the following plan was proposed: No later than in two months after communists win the presidential elections, the Congress of Russian Federation Soviets — dissolved in 1993 — should be convened to restore the soviet form of power all over Russia.

This will become a signal for wide segments of the working people in Ukraine and Kazakhstan to launch their measures of protest. We will render them any fraternal assistance they require. We have no problems with Belarus. Later, we will convene a congress of USSR people's deputies, whose activities were also halted illegally in 1991, and will restore the power of the working people in the form of soviet power on the territory of the four republics. The remaining republics of the former USSR will join the union.... But, there will be problems with the Baltic states.

S. Terekhov's report was primarily devoted to the work of the Officers' Union in the troops.

Viktor Ilyushin, head of the Russian Duma Security Committee, said that Russian communists regard the upcoming presidential elections not as an election campaign, but as their last battle, with all the ensuing consequences: We will either win or launch clandestine activities. He confirmed the readiness of Russian communists to encourage mass protests in Ukraine in support of leftist forces.

General B. Ivanov said that the prevailing majority of the Belarusian people are ready for a political, economic, and military union with Russia in any form.

Since 3 March, the leftist forces have been organizing a series of measures linked to commemorating the memory of I. Stalin. There are plans to hold a congress of communist and patriotic parties and movements, at which it will be proposed to support three candidates of the leftist forces — G. Zyuganov, A. Tuleyev, and P. Romanov. The primary condition is that in the second round they will give their votes to G. Zyuganov. In addition, V. Anpilov insists on Zyuganov issuing a written statement regarding his intentions to restore the power of soviets, to denounce the Belaya Vezha agreements, and to abolish the institution of president.

The presence of powerful opposition mass media characterizes Russian political life. In addition to newspapers — PRAVDA, SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA — and the journal KOMMUNIST, which carry powerful antigovernment propaganda, dozens of regional communist and patriotic publications are published which considerably influence public opinion, particularly among the low-paid segments of the population.

When one meets with official representatives of power, it is possible to see their confusion and lack of confidence in the future.

As it became known, the Russian Federation Officers' Union established in Russian and CIS cities clandestine officers' squads armed with modern weapons and equipped with mobile means of communications who would be ready to organize protests and challenge official power bodies during zero hour. An operational plan under the codename "Great Purge No. 2" has been drafted and approved envisaging the arrest and physical removal of democratic parties' activists, state officials, and representatives of big business. Lists with names and addresses of these individuals have been input in computers and are being revised on a permanent basis.

The congress adopted a secret resolution addressing the work in the Ukrainian Armed Forces. It recommends Ukrainian comrades not to be involved in political infighting in their country, to strengthen their ranks, to set up primary organizations based on the CPSU platform, and to follow developments in Russia.

According to available data, the most powerful branches of the Union of USSR Officers operate in the units of the 43d Missile Army, in Crimea, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa, Kharkov, and Kiev.

A high-ranking officer of the Russian Defense Ministry General Staff said at the closed meeting of the organizational committee that Defense Minister P. Grachev has

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conducted a meeting with the General Staff at which he provided them with precise instructions regarding their activities if a state of emergency is declared. In A. Grachev's opinion, a state of emergency can be introduced if the war in the Caucasus becomes more intense.

The primary conclusions are as follows:

1. Russian communist patriotic forces are preparing to exercise revenge.

2. The most decisive role in the political fight has been given to the Army. Communists began to pull the Army actively onto their side.

3. Those in power in Russia are now unable to challenge an attack by communists and patriots.

4. Russian communists give Ukraine the primary role in the establishment of a new empire. Therefore, they will launch measures to destabilize the situation in Ukraine in order to bring it into the sphere of Russian interests. In Ukraine, a "fifth column" of the most orthodox communists and pro-Russian officers is being set up and actively financed. The use of the "Russian-language" card in eastern and southern oblasts of the country is also not excluded.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Report Warns of New Military Group's 'Antistate Activity'

AU1803135296 Kiev NARODNA HAZETA in Ukrainian No. 11 (241) Mar 96 p 1

[Report by reserve officer P. Ahramakov from Odessa: "Antistate Grouping"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In one of the city basements, an Odessa organization that calls itself "The Union of Soviet Officers" [SSO] held its semilegal constituent session. I was present.

During the discussion of the program of the so-called "union," it became clear that it is not a public organization but a military-political unit of the Communist Party whose goal is to do away with the independent Ukrainian state and restore the USSR through a "dictatorship of the proletariat." Its activities are directed from abroad.

The speakers called for the overthrow of the constitutional system through a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and for the seizure of state power and the dissemination of materials with instructions on how to do this, especially in territory where military units are based. They complained that servicemen refuse to talk to them and do not let them enter soldiers' barracks.

One "officer" stated that it would be good if servicemen were left without salaries for four to six months and not just for two months, so that they would join the "Union of Soviet Officers" on their own.

On the recommendation of the Communist Party, a Communist, Lieutenant Colonel Chernihov (as he called himself), was elected chairman of the organization. In general, it was decided to create a leading body based on military regulations and with strict discipline. The chairman proposed that five persons be elected to it, but "for obvious reasons, he did not give their names. However, they accidentally revealed themselves, and then the chairman sternly warned those present not to advertise who and from where these people are. This was yet further proof that the "Union of Soviet Officers" will illegally conduct antistate subversive activity and therefore members of the organization are subject to punishment in accordance with Article 56 (Part 2, 3) of the law of 24 December 1993 "On Intensification of Criminal Responsibility."

The following may be said: The meeting was held by pensioned officers (in the reserve) who will aim their activity against the state, which, despite hardships, is paying them high privilege pensions.

It is noted in the "SSO" statute that membership may be applied for by citizens who have reached the age of 18 and who are recommended by two persons. Therefore, the organization is not limited to officers alone.

The Prosecutor's Office must also take this into account.

The Odessa oblast organization of the Union of Ukrainian Officers has appealed to the relevant law-enforcement authorities to ban the "SSO" and disband it as a political organization that is hostile to our state and people. It has called upon all of its members in the provinces and servicemen in our army to strengthen military discipline, improve combat readiness, temper their moral spirit, and intensify vigilance.

Ukraine: Defense Ministry Reassures About Safety of ICBM Dismantling

WS1903103996 Kiev UKRINFORM in English 0833 GMT 19 Mar 96

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Speaking at a briefing for journalists in Kiev on Monday, March 18 Oleksandr Serdyuk, chief of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry's Strategic Nuclear Administration Center, and Hennadiy Selivanov, the Natural Environmental Protection Ministry's special agency chief, reassured the public at large as to safety of implementing the Ukrainian intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBM] dismantling program,

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which is proceeding under a strict international control and, for the first time, in a civilized manner. All the technical difficulties notwithstanding which involve "microsurgical operations" performed on ICBM silos, they said, the ICBM dismantling process poses no environmental hazards, radioactive contamination included.

Ukraine: 'Cesium-137' Reportedly 'Stolen' From Chemical Plant

AU1903104696 Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 16 Mar 96 p 9

[Unattributed report: "'Cesium-137' Has Been Stolen"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The radioactive substance "Cesium-137" has been stolen from one of the shops of the chemical plant in the town of Dniprodzerzhynsk (in the Dnieper Region). Its radioactivity amounts to 1.5 curies.

Officers of Ukraine's Security Service and Ministry of Internal Affairs arrived at the scene of the incident. The Press Service of the Civil Defense Headquarters reported this event.

Ukraine: Radioactive Accident at Chernobyl Deliberately Concealed

LD1903112596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1014 GMT 19 Mar 96

[By Mikhail Melnik]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV March 19 (Itar-Tass) — Ten years after the worst 7-point nuclear disaster at the Chernobyl power plant in Ukraine, which Soviet authorities tried, but failed to conceal from the world public, the administration of the plant still believes that not all the radioactive leaks should be reported to the public and tried to conceal a three-point accident which occurred last November.

"If the consequences of the incident go beyond the territory of the plant, then it is necessary to immediately inform the public", Chernobyl Director General Sergey Parashin told Tass on Tuesday reporting an incident on November 17 when an employee got an annual radiation dose in one day, but the case was not made public.

"In that case the consequences of the incident affected only the plant and it should have been reported only to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which has been done", he added.

Parashin disclosed that on November 17, 1995 a three-point accident occurred at the first reactor of the plant when nuclear fuel was unloaded and a container with it got unsealed.

He said the bottom of the container got loose when it was reloaded from the reactor to the storage facility and one or several tablets of the nuclear fuel fell on the transportation vehicle.

The leak was spotted only ten days later and the true causes of the contamination were established only in January, Parashin admitted.

An increase in the radioactive background was spotted during a routine decontamination of the transportation vehicle which was washed by a special solution after which a contamination of the floor in the central hall was reported.

It was found out that the hose through which the used solution was poured away was leaking. It was erroneously decided that this was the main contamination cause, the incident was assessed as point 1 and reported to the Ukrainian Ecology Ministry and the Atomic Energy Committee.

The true cause of the contamination was established two months later when a new increase in the radioactive background was reported. It was then established that parts of the fuel from the vehicle got into several premises of the plant and that the contamination of the central hall was caused by radioactive dust washed off from the vehicle.

The accident was finally listed as point-three according to the international INES scale.

On April 26, 1986 the fourth reactor of the Chernobyl power plant exploded triggering a nuclear contamination disaster also in neighbouring Belarus and Russia. However, Soviet authorities concealed the accident and thousands of residents of Kiev and of other Soviet nearby cities marched during May 1 demonstrations in contaminated environment.

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Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka Calls For Studying Integration With Russia

LD1803195096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1856 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, Mar 18 (Interfax-West) — Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka has urged parliament to take up the issue of "accelerated Belarusian-Russian integration in the context of the Russian State Duma resolution," which effectively denounced the Belovezh Accords on the setting up of the CIS. He said he was prepared to take part in the debate.

"It is important now that reasonable political forces in Belarus and Russia that are prepared to help the two presidents in remedying the errors of the past should unite," Lukashenka said in Minsk Monday at a conference attended by government and parliament leaders. The conference discussed the Belarusian-Russian integration, in particular, the concept of a treaty on the setting up of a Belarusian-Russian alliance which is expected to be signed by the two presidents late in March or early in April.

Lukashenka emphasized that the State Duma resolution "is likely to speed up the process of Belarusian-Russian unification that was initiated by the honest and sincere political will of the presidents."

"Unification of the peoples on an equal civilized basis is dictated by time and cannot be stopped," he said.

Belarus: Lukashenka Seeks Reliable Global Nuclear Safety System

LD1803184296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1413 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, March 18 (Interfax-West) — A reliable global nuclear safety system can only be created by joint efforts of all countries, Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka declared at an international conference on Chernobyl problems in Minsk Monday.

Stressing that Belarus was hit the hardest by the April 1986 Chernobyl accident, he disclosed that every fifth citizen of the republic lives in an area exposed to radiation.

More than 6,000 square kilometers of land have been declared unsuitable for farming, more than 400 communities have been proclaimed restrictive zones, about 600 schools and kindergartens, and 54 farms have been closed, the president said, estimating the republic's losses from the Chernobyl disaster over the past ten years at 32 annual budgets. Belarus spends up to 25 percent of the yearly state budget on work to eliminate the disaster's effects, Lukashenka stressed.

Belarus: Russian-Belarusian Slavnafta To Cooperate With Iran

WS1803124296 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1100 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Slavnafta Russian-Belarusian oil and gas company has plans to cooperate with Iran in the oil sector. Slavneft Deputy President Mikalay Dyurik gave this information to the oil information agency when he commented on the results of the participation of Slavnafta in the first international exhibition of oil and gas and oil-chemical industries which took place in Teheran in late February.

According to him, the visit by the Russian delegation was of a preliminary nature. No official agreements or contracts were signed. Iran Oil Ministry representatives, however, expressed their wish to cooperate with us in the sector of oil exploration and extraction in both Russia and Iran as well as in third countries, said Mikalay Dyurik.

Moldova

Moldova: Snegur Shares Yeltsin's View on Duma CIS Decision

LD1903122296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1049 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHISINAU, March 19 (Interfax) — Moldovan President Mircea Snegur shares his Russian counterpart Boris Yeltsin's position over the State Duma decision that effectively denounced the 1991 Belovezh Accords, which formed the CIS.

A cable sent to Yeltsin by Snegur today notes that the decision of the Russian parliament's lower house aims "to torpedo the democratic transformations in the new independent states" and may "harm the flourishing economic cooperation between our countries."

Welcoming Yeltsin's course toward sweeping democratic reforms in society and pledging to promote cooperation with Russia in all fields, Snegur said "there can be no return today to the Communist past, where they are trying to drag us."

Moldova: Snegur Denies Charges of Subverting Statehood

LD1803202296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1856 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHISINAU, Mar 18 (Interfax) — Moldovan President Mircea Snegur said that the

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goal of his work is to consolidate Moldovan statehood, maintain the unity and territorial integrity of the country and regain its true spiritual values. President Mircea Snegur's Response to His Opponents was made public in Chisinau Monday.

Numerous charges had been leveled at Snegur in mass media and during the closed session of parliament last Saturday.

Snegur believes that the true cause of the campaign against him is his position on the name of the state language, transforming land into a commodity, giving up state control over the press and the speech against corruption he made in parliament.

"Those who master-minded this campaign are aware that these steps will awaken the people and result in the loss of the social basis for 'agrarian patriots' and ultimately in final failure of their anti-national policy," Snegur writes.

His letter also says that charges of constitutional violations leveled against the president must be verified and duly proved. Snegur said that he has a right to protect his good name against crude and groundless charges.

Moldova: Parliament Urges Moratorium on Defense Minister Dismissal

AU1803153996 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 1332 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, March 18 (INFOTAG) — The Moldovan Parliament has proposed to President Snegur to impose a moratorium on his decree on the defense minister dismissal. Such a decision was passed by the forum on Saturday night [16 March] after 6 hour long closed-door debates concerning the situation around the Ministry of Defense.

Parliament Chairman Petru Lucinschi told journalists after the sitting that a conflict-like situation emerged in the armed forces, which is absolutely inadmissible. President Snegur has agreed with the forum's proposition, and announced a moratorium on his decree till a decision is made by the Constitutional Court, he said.

"The government has requested the court to urgently analyze the constitutionality of the decree, for only the Constitutional Court is authorized to give a legal assessment of the decree", Lucinschi said.

Till that time, the situation in the army should be frozen so that to avoid any possible complications. During this period, neither Pavel Creanga, nor a new minister will have a right to sign documents, issue orders, enlist or dismiss officers.

Journalists asked Petru Lucinschi about the position of the Government and Prime Minister on the issue. Premier Andrei Sangheli stated in parliament that the minister of defense can be dismissed only on the proposition and with a consent of the head of government. Andrei Sangheli did not give such a consent. During that parliament sitting, the president requested the premier to propose a candidature for the post of defense minister.

Petru Lucinschi has refuted rumors concerning alleged attempts by the legislature to announce a vote of no confidence to President Snegur.

The Saturday's debates were fairly heated. Deputies voiced diametrically different opinions. Thus, several representatives of the Socialist Unity faction insisted on reinstalling Pavel Creanga in his office. Most agrarian democrats and both opposition factions urged to appeal to the Constitutional Court. Mircea Snegur, who took the floor several times, has agreed with that proposition.

A total of 23 deputies took the floor that day. Many of them called to overcome the differences between power branches, stressing that exactly those differences were the reason for Snegur's issuing the decree of the defense minister dismissal.

Deputy Sergiu Mocanu of the Popular Front told INFOTAG that the debates were senseless and could only lead to a strain in the armed forces and the society. In his opinion, there were no doubts from the very beginning that the decree's constitutionality could only be determined by the Constitutional Court. Sergiu Mocanu has condemned the fact that the sitting was behind the closed doors, and journalists had to wait in the lobby for over six hours.

President Snegur is not going to cast any doubts on the decision of the Constitutional Court which is examining his decree on the dismissal of the Defense Minister Pavel Creanga.

On Saturday night, Snegur stated at a press conference that he "shall guarantee stability in the army till the court announces its decision. Acting Minister of Defense Brig. Gen. Tudor Dabija shall be responsible for the general situation in the armed forces. The dismissed defense minister is not prohibited to stay in the ministry building".

Mircea Snegur denied assertions that he had removed Pavel Creanga in order to entice the army.

"This is nonsense. I am the supreme commander in chief, and there is no need to make additional attempts to pull the army on my side. I have always been against politicalization of the army. The reason of Creanga's

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dismissal lies in the revealed facts of corruption, and his age", the president said.

He said he shared the parliament's concern about a possible emergence of a strain in the Army. "But there is no strain", he emphasized.

Concerning the debates in parliament, Mircea Snegur said, "upon the whole, the discussion was fairly constructive, but I heard several insulting attacks against myself, particularly from the Socialist Unity faction".

"I am not going to analyze the attacks. I guess, I do not deserve such an attitude. I am categorically against accusations that this was an attempted coup. Next week I am going to prepare an answer to these deputies", Snegur promised.

The Socialist Unity faction even attempted to provoke a discussion concerning his impeachment, but the rest of the forum did not support the idea.

President Snegur believes it is "a good idea" to have a civilian as minister of defense. Such a variant is possible, but the moment for that is not very favorable now, because the national army restructuring process is not over yet. He failed to name potential candidates to the ministerial post, having remarked that appropriate consultations will be continued.

There may be changes in the government, for this body cannot remain as a constant unit for 4 four years, he said. In his opinion, there has been too much noise around the defense minister dismissal.

Moldova: Tiraspol Seeks Recognition Following Creanga's Dismissal

LD1803184896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1413 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TIRASPOL, March 18 (Interfax) — The unrest in Moldova following the removal of Gen. Pavel Creanga from his post as defense minister once again prove the validity of Tiraspol's requests for international guarantees in settling the Transdniester issue, Valeriy Litskay, the unrecognized Republic of Transdniester's foreign minister, told Interfax in an exclusive interview.

Proposals from Chisinau to solve the issue within the framework of the Moldovan Constitution do not sufficiently guarantee Tiraspol's safety, he said.

"The situation in Moldova remains dangerous enough, and the relative stability could collapse at any time," Litskay said. "So the Moldovan Constitution does not really guarantee any safety for Transdniester."

"When the president fires a neutral defense minister and appoints his own man during an election year, it means he doesn't feel confident in his ability to win the elections without the army's help. All this could lead to the establishment of unlimited executive authority. The world has seen this sort of thing before," he said.

He was wary of the temporary appointment of Brigadier General Tudor Dabiza, who led Moldovan troops in the bloody tragedy in Benderakh in June 1992.

Transdniester's president, Igor Smirnov, and Supreme Soviet speaker Grigoriy Marakutsa have kept up constant telephone communications with the head of the Moldovan parliament Peter Luchinskiy and Prime Minister Andrey Sangheli to discuss the defense minister situation.

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Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: Almaty Silent on Russian Duma Vote Denouncing CIS Accords

LD1503181696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1629 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ALMATY, Mar 15 (INTERFAX) — Kazakh presidential staff members would not state an Almaty position on the Russian State Duma resolution passed Friday on deeper integration of peoples of the Soviet Union and on the abolition of the Russian parliament December 12, 1991, resolution dissolving the Soviet Union.

"So far, there will be no comment on the issue," a high-ranking presidential staff official told Interfax.

The Kazakh Foreign Ministry would not comment on the issue either.

The Interfax sources would not explain their refusal to comment.

Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev: Duma Vote Cannot Stop CIS Integration

LD1803120096 Almaty Kazakh Television First Program Network in Russian 1500 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today is the fifth anniversary of the referendum on preserving the Soviet Union. A total of 70 percent of the population voted for it then, but that did not save the USSR from collapsing within nine months. The Russian State Duma marked this modest jubilee with a sensational decision to denounce the Belovezh agreements [to set up CIS, in December 1991]. The republics of the former Soviet Union reacted fairly sharply. Georgia said this decision was an attack on integration. Armenia said it was an act of provocation, and the president of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, said that history is not a film that can be wound back, and the Baltic republics said that they have nothing to do with this.

Kazakhstan's stand was expressed by President [Nursultan] Nazarbayev:

[Begin Nazarbayev recording] I welcome the position of Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin in relation to the resolution recently adopted by the State Duma. As far back as 19 January this year, at the meeting of heads of state of CIS in Moscow, I made a special statement that during the election campaign to the State Duma certain political activists expressed a need or possibility to reestablish the former USSR. I said this was fraught with major destabilization and bloodshed on the entire territory [of the former USSR]. I also said there that we must proceed further along the road to integration, and establish new models along these lines.

My stand on the collapse of the USSR in 1991, and my subsequent stand on deepening our integration, is known to everyone but it is clear to me now that those forces that went into opposition as the result of the putsch of 19 August 1991 and undermined the signing of the Union Treaty and the present ones are the same. One must simply remember history and say that the collapse of the USSR started long before the Belovezh events, when the apparatchiks of the Russian Communist Party decided to separate the Russian Communist Party from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. However, the CPSU was merely a shell and as you know that shell was destroyed at that moment.

What are these same forces aiming for? To alienate the CIS states, and to sow an atmosphere of instability and lack of trust, to destroy the CIS and, I tell you directly, thereby to destroy Russian statehood. Is this not too dear a price for political games on the eve of presidential elections in Russia? I confirm that there is no alternative to integration on CIS territory. Now we are working to establish a new model of integration in the social, economic, and humanitarian sphere. The signing of a major document is planned by the end of March. This will mean mutually beneficial integration built on the principles of equality, respect for the independence and sovereignty of each state, and recognition of the borders and territorial integrity of each state. This is the way in which we must move ahead.

Kazakhstan will never abandon its independence and its sovereignty. The Kazakh people and Kazakhstan will defend it with all their means. The independence and the sovereignty of Kazakhstan are irreversible now. Any action by any political forces or by certain citizens, who work against the constitution that guarantees Kazakhstan's independence, who support the aim of destabilizing the situation with calls to violate the structure of the state — such actions by political associations and by certain persons will be firmly stopped. Such associations will be banned and the initiators of such calls, if there are any such citizens, will be called to account by law.

We, the people of Kazakhstan, the entire people of Kazakhstan, are living in conditions of stability, mutual understanding, and friendship. Our task, the task of all of us, is to preserve this friendship, this stability, this calm and this trust. Then we will solve all our problems. The opinions of the Dumas of other states have nothing to do with us. Yesterday I had a talk with Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, and he confirmed to me that the Russian Duma decision does not carry any legal force, and that the [Russian] executive power will take no action on this account. I support this. Thus, the decision of this other state will have no impact on

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our lives and on our activities. We have a constitution, we have our own laws, we will live and build our common home, our Kazakhstan, according to them. [end recording]

Kazakhstan: U.S. Envoy Praises Kazakhstan's Economic Reforms

LD1203145896 Almaty Kazakh Commercial Television Network in Russian 1325 GMT 11 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] James Collins, ambassador of the U.S. Department of State for relations with the newly independent CIS states, arrived in Almaty yesterday. He had talks with Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister [Kasymzhomart] Tokayev and President [Nursultan] Nazarbayev today.

[Unidentified correspondent] The U.S. delegation included Deputy Secretary for Defense Ashton Carter, Director in the National Security Council Coit Blacker, U.S. Ambassador Elizabeth Jones, and Richard Morningstar, coordinator of U.S. aid to the newly independent states.

U.S. Ambassador James Collins conveyed a personal message to Nursultan Nazarbayev from President Bill Clinton in which Clinton praised the efforts made by our head of state to carry out full-scale reform and to develop Kazakhstan as an independent sovereign state. Nazarbayev told the U.S. delegation about the reform process and the prospects for cooperation between the two countries, specifically, involving American private capital and the privatization of companies.

The role of the Central Asian Fund, which financed 16 draft projects, was praised. The legal status of the Caspian Sea and security in Tajikistan were also discussed. The United States is trying to achieve a better understanding of the newly independent states and the main road to economic development is through open access to markets and free trade. Integration between CIS countries must be based on voluntary principles, without pressure, and serving the interests of all countries.

[Announcer] James Collins had a meeting with Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin today. The envoy stressed the U.S. Government's support for the economic reforms undertaken by the Kazakh Government. It is ready for closer cooperation in the future too. There was a broad exchange of views on issues of international security, transportation of oil, and the expansion of trade relations.

Kazakhstan: Government Seen Clarifying Oman's Role in Oil Consortium

MK1503151396 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 15 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Petr Kolomenskiy, Beket Aubakirov: "Kazakhstan Specifies Where It Stands on Oman's CPC Participation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kazakhstani Government press service has released a statement concerning the Caspian Pipeline Consortium [CPC] and the participation in it of Oman Oil Company (OOC). It corrects news reports on the statement by Akezhan Qazhygeldin, prime minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to the effect that all the OOC representatives have resigned as members of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium board of directors.

This information could have resulted from either the wrong interpretation of statements that had really been made or an attempt to link together and interpret the statement and rumors of talks between CPC members.

The government of Kazakhstan does not wish to harm the interests of its business partners and states that under the agreement, each CPC member indeed has the right to replace its representatives in the board of directors and in other CPC structures. For reasons of its own, the Sultanate of Oman Government replaced Mr. Dzh. Doys [as transcribed] and Mr. Said bin Ahmad al-Shanfari, who had represented it earlier, with Mr. Maqbul bin Ali al-Sultan and Mr. Mahammad bin Nasser Al Hasibi.

Rather significantly, Kazakhstan's official reaction comes more than a month after the news it denies was reported. Consortium representatives reacted faster. CPC General Director Edward Smith repudiated Kazakhstani prime minister's statement virtually right away.

In all likelihood, even if too daring, the interpretation by news agencies of Mr. Qazhygeldin's statement did not contradict too much the Kazakhstani premier's intentions. Not surprisingly, the denial came right after the CPC board of directors and shareholders ended their conference in Moscow last Friday [8 March]. After the talks, Oman's share was considerably reduced — from 21.5 percent down to 7 percent. The project took on board the "LUKoil," Agip, British Gas, ARCO, Chevron, and Mobil companies, which received a total of 50 percent of the consortium's shares.

It is quite probable that Kazakhstan had raised the question of totally excluding Oman from the project. Since a different decision was made, however, Kazakhstan remembered the episode of more than a month ago either

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on its own initiative or honoring commitments to the other CPC members.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan: Akayev: Duma CIS Accords Decision Has No Legal Force

LD1603173196 Bishkek Kyrgyz Radio First Program Network in Russian 1230 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Interview with Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev by Vladimir Fedorov, Russian Public Television correspondent, on 16 March, place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Fedorov] Askar Akayevich, of course we are all gathered with one single aim, one question. What is your reaction to this event in Russia's State Duma?

[Akayev] I have read the Russian Federation State Duma's resolution of 15 March thoroughly, and I think this is exclusively the internal affair of the Russian Federation, though this document of course touches the interests of the new independent states. I would like to note that this decision will not have any legal consequences in the Commonwealth of Independent States, because this document does not have legal force, but contradicts, first and foremost, the existing Constitution of the Russian Federation itself. I regard this document, this decision by the State Duma, as an exclusively political action taken in order to receive gains in the presidential election campaign.

As for intensifying integration processes in the CIS, this process is picking up speed anyway. I believe in particular that we have achieved a lot in the last two years, with the Russian Federation chairing the Commonwealth and Russian President Boris Yeltsin chairing the Council of the Heads of States. [passage omitted]

So I do not see here the necessity for a third force to push this integration process. On the contrary, this may just hinder these processes. And I think the decision by the Russian Federation is just the sort of decision that may prevent the acceleration, intensification of the integration processes in the CIS that have taken shape in the last years. As far as Kyrgyzstan is concerned, I can firmly say that this decision will in no way affect relations between Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation. And we are going to Moscow soon on an official visit to sign a new agreement with Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin on intensifying economic cooperation, strengthening traditional friendship between the people of Russia and Kyrgyzstan, and broadening ties in the humanitarian sphere. We will also sign an agreement on joining the customs union.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Foreign Ministry Statement on Duma Decision on CIS Accord

LD1803181296 Dushanbe KHOVAR in Russian 1220 GMT 18 Mar 96

["Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan" — KHOVAR headline]

[FBIS Translated Text] The decision adopted by the Russian Duma to denounce the Belovezh agreement may have juridical consequences for Russia itself, primarily. However, one cannot but mention its moral and informational influence on those states that once made up the USSR.

Present realities are such that it is in practical terms impossible to reconstitute the former Soviet Union. There is an alternative — a close union of the former Soviet republics on a fundamentally different basis, taking into account the sovereignty of each state, the further development and reinforcement of deep and multifaceted trends toward integration.

Dushanbe, 18 March 1996

Tajikistan: Official Spokesman: Restoration of Former USSR 'Impossible'

LD1603152196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1351 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, March 16 (INTERFAX) — Tajikistan was not among those who initiated the USSR's breakup but given the present historic reality the restoration of the USSR fully as it was is unrealistic and impossible, Tajik presidential spokesman Zafar Saidov told Interfax in Dushanbe Saturday.

The Tajik leadership favors closer political and economic integration between the CIS countries, Saidov said. "This is in fact the only realistic reserve for achieving progress and reflecting the country's national interests in the best way," he said.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov has repeatedly emphasized the necessity for such integration on the basis of sovereignty, Saidov said.

The Tajik president supports the initiatives to create a brand new inter-state formation based on a different political and legal system of cooperation which have been put forward by leaders of several former Soviet republics, Saidov said.

"The illusion that we could handle our problems alone in a better and more efficient fashion and will have become full-fledged members of the world community

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has vanished. Not a single former Soviet republic did better alone. Life itself teaches us that in fact the only realistic way to achieve progress is to accelerate integration and force the joining of efforts," Saidov said.

There is no alternative to mutual rapprochement between the CIS countries in the economic, political, scientific and cultural areas, Saidov said.

Tajikistan: Defense Minister Says Army Respecting Ceasefire Agreement

LD1503121196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1119 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, Mar 15 (INTERFAX) — The Tajik government forces are abiding by the temporary ceasefire agreement that has been extended until May 26.

The government forces "have never initiatied and have no intention of being the first to initiate hostilities against the opposition units in the Tavil Dara region, 200 kilometers east of Dushanbe," Tajik Defense Minister Sherali Khayrullayev told Interfax in an exclusive interview Friday.

"We will only protect our positions and regional settlements," stressed the minister.

The government troops "are staying in the village of Saiyed, and the militants are located in the Lyulikharvi settlement. The distance between them is about 1.5-2 kilometers," he said.

"The government troops did not launch any large-scale combat operations against the opposition groups in Tavil Dara this month," he noted.

Units of the Tajik Defense Ministry stationed in the foothills of the Pamirs "had to suppress opposition firing positions on March 11-13 in response to provocations by the militants."

The gunmen shelled government positions with surface-to-surface missiles near the villages of Khur and Dashtisher on March 11 and 12. The government troops returned fire and killed 46 gunmen. On March 13 the gunmen fired on government positions.

"We reserve the right to adequate measures, which will be taken only in response to provocations by the opposition gunmen," said Khayrullayev.

Tajikistan: Islamic Guerrillas Plan To Cut Tajik Highway

LD1803201596 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 0500 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Video report by correspondent T. Logunova; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tension is not subsiding on the Tajik-Afghan border, which is also guarded by our Russian soldiers.

[Logunova] Outlying positions of the 12th outpost of the Moskovskiy border detachment come under fire almost every day. In the last such attack guerrillas of the Islamic opposition fired 10 rockets at the (Turk) border post alone. Since the beginning of March, over 80 rockets have exploded in positions manned by men from the outpost. The Shuroabad area of the Tajik-Afghan border has become one of the hottest. A strategic highway, the Shuroabad-Kulyab-Dushanbe road, lies to the rear of the area covered by the 12th border outpost. This is largely explains why border violators concentrate on this area.

Furthermore, the outlying positions of the 12th border outpost are surrounded by mountains and hidden gorges. Exploiting this fact, the guerrillas slip across in small, armed groups from Afghanistan to Tajikistan, from where they fire on the positions of the Russian border guards. According to military intelligence reports, there are now several dozen guerrillas of the so-called Kulyab front operating in the (Kafergash) and Zarbuz gorges on Tajik territory. They were trained at Taloqan in Afghanistan to carry out the armed struggle against Russian border guards. The guerrillas regularly ferry weapons and ammunition between Taloqan, Chah-i-Ab (Yalur), and (Shalmund).

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan: Niyazov Meets Pakistani Foreign Minister

LD1603141196 Ashgabat TURKMEN PRESS in Russian 1129 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ashgabat, 15 Mar — President Saparmurad Turkmenbashy [Niyazov] of Turkmenistan today met with Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali. During prolonged talks, they discussed bilateral cooperation, regional security, and the opportunities for maintaining stability in this part of Asia. [passage omitted]

It is being proposed that within the framework of the upcoming Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] summit, corresponding intergovernmental agreements on these matters be signed. The Pakistani foreign

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minister said it is also planned to draw up documents for the opening of a trade representative office and a Pakistani bank in Ashgabat.

An agreement on exporting Turkmen cotton to Pakistan was also reached during today's meeting. For its part, Pakistan will in the nearest future deliver over 10,000 tonnes of grain to Turkmenistan. This amount could be increased should the Turkmen side wish.

Turkmenistan: Bilateral Relations To Be Developed With Pakistan

LD1503203896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1843 GMT 15 Mar 96

[By Anna Kurbatova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ASHGABAT, March 15 (ITAR-TASS) — Turkmen President Saparmurad Niyazov and Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali on Friday discussed the development of bilateral relations and the participation of both states in the implementation of projects of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation.

The two sides also discussed the forthcoming summit of heads of state of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation scheduled for May in the Turkmen capital, a spokesman for the press service of the Turkmen president told Itar-Tass.

Turkmenistan will chair the Organisation for Economic Cooperation in 1996. The organisation was established in 1985 by Pakistan, Iran and Turkey. In 1992, another six Commonwealth states became members of this organisation — Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as well as Afghanistan.

According to the press service of the Turkmen president, the Pakistani foreign minister exchanged on a number of drafts of inter-government agreements which are expected to be signed during the upcoming summit of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation.

They envisage expanding of cooperation in the reconstruction of the motor-highway and building of power pipelines. These projects will link the route Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan.

During the meeting, the sides reached an understanding to speed up deliveries of Turkmen cotton to Pakistan and 10,000 tonnes of wheat to Turkmenistan.

The two sides noted that the opening of a trade mission and bank of Pakistan in Turkmenistan will promote the strengthening of trade ties between the two countries.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan: Karimov: Duma Decision on CIS Viewed 'With Great Concern'

LD1803183996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1638 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TASHKENT, Mar 18 (INTERFAX) — Uzbekistan perceives the State Duma decision on effective denunciation of the Belovezh Accords "with great concern," Uzbek President Islam Karimov said in a message presented to Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

"Uzbekistan has once and forever chosen the way of independence, of equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with all states and primarily with Russia and the Russian people with whom we are connected by century-long ties of friendship and brotherhood. We are convinced that all necessary measures for a worthy repulse to different political circles which try to return Russia to the old, obsolete system will be taken by you, by the president and Russia's recognized leader supported by all democratic forces, forces of renewal of the Russian society. Russia will occupy its appropriate place in the world community," Karimov wrote.

Uzbekistan: Karimov Calls Duma Vote on USSR Populist Ploy

LD1703191696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1809 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TASHKENT, March 17 (INTERFAX) — Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov stated that "the populism demonstrated by the Russian parliament has nothing to do with our policy of strengthening independence and democracy, supported by the entire nation."

He made this statement commenting on the State Duma vote of March 15 denouncing the agreements which gave birth to the CIS.

The Duma decision "is actually aimed at restoring the former Soviet Union," Karimov told the people's deputies of the Khorezm region in Urgench Sunday. His speech was broadcast on Uzbek TV.

"The people of Uzbekistan became independent on August 31, 1991, long before the official breakup of the U.S.S.R.," he said.

Uzbekistan: Parliament Criticizes Russian Duma's Vote

LD1703111096 Tashkent Radio Tashkent Network in Russian 0300 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A broadened sitting of the Presidium of the Supreme Assembly of Republic of

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Uzbekistan has taken place. The chairmanship of the Supreme Assembly, the chairmen of committees, the leaders of party groups of deputies and of political parties and movements took part in it. An attitude towards the Russian Duma decision on 15 March, aimed at restoration of the former USSR, was expressed at the sitting. [passage omitted]

It was stressed in the resolution adopted at the sitting of the Presidium of the Supreme Assembly that the resolution adopted by the Russian Federation Duma on 15 March on the restoration of the former USSR should be not be considered as part of any discussion. Uzbekistan has firmly chosen its own path in establishing and strengthening an independent and democratic law-based state and civic society, based on market relations and joining the world community.

Uzbekistan has no desire even to start any discussions on the legality or illegality of the establishment of the CIS, or on any matter related to participating in any Eurasian union, federation or confederation that might be formed in any document that might be signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia aimed at the restoration of the former Soviet Union.

Any integration process aimed at forming a supra-state body or establishment would not be acceptable to Uzbekistan. The Presidium of the Supreme Assembly once again stresses that the way chosen by Uzbekistan has been adopted on the basis of the results of the nationwide referendum conducted in December 1991, in which 98.2 percent of voters voted in favor of the question on the referendum set by Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Uzbekistan: "Do you approve the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan?" [passage omitted]

Uzbekistan: Karimov Meets With IMF Representatives in Tashkent

LD1503213296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1959 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TASHKENT, March 15 (FIA-INTERFAX) — President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov and International Monetary Fund representatives met in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent Friday [18 March] to discuss prospects for further cooperation between Uzbekistan and the IMF, a representative of the Uzbek Central Bank told Interfax's Financial Information Agency.

Karimov met with IMF Executive Director Daniel Kaeser and Director of the IMF Second European Department John Olding Smith, the same source said.

An IMF mission is in Tashkent for the tenth day. IMF representatives plan to examine the measures taken by the Uzbek government in order to meet IMF recommendations, the Central Bank representative said. On the results of the talks, Uzbekistan may receive $74 million worth of the second tranche of an IMF loan within the scope of the crediting of the economic reforms program.

The IMF extended $74 million worth of the first tranche of the loan in January 1995 for ten years at a 5 percent annual interest rate with a 4.5-year delay in repayment. The money was spent on maintaining the national currency's exchange rate. The loan's second tranche is expected to be provided under similar conditions.

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Armenia

Armenia: Parliament Motion on Duma Decision on USSR Detailed

NC1803212396 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1900 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Statement by deputies of the Armenian National Assembly on the Russian State Duma's 15 March decisions — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 15 March 1996 the Russian Federation's Duma adopted some decisions in an attempt to revive the Soviet Union by in effect ignoring irrefutable historic realities. These decisions to invalidate the Belovezh agreements infringe upon international law, the sovereignty of the states that have emerged on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and the freedom of the peoples. The Duma's adventurist decisions are a sign of cynical disdain for civilized interstate relations and violate elementary international norms. They can have no legal consequence at all, in particular for Armenia.

Defying the brute military pressure of the expiring Soviet empire five years ago, the Armenian Supreme Council, guided by the will of the Armenian people, decided on 1 March 1991 not to participate in the 17 March referendum on the preservation of the empire and instead held its own referendum on 21 September 1991 and declared the independence of the Armenian Republic in accordance with international law and the Soviet laws.

Today the Armenian Republic's independence has been recognized by the international community. Armenia is a member of the UN, the OSCE, and many other prestigious international organizations.

The Armenian Republic's sovereignty is also confirmed in the Armenian Republic's Constitution, according to which the republic's sovereignty and independence are irrevocable. Any infringement of the sovereignty of any state must be condemned by the entire international community.

The Armenian Republic has always participated in the constructive processes taking place within the framework of the CIS and other international organizations. However, such unilateral decisions by the Duma could be destructive to the still fragile structure of the CIS.

The Duma's resolutions reflect the crude and arbitrary actions, fraught with bloody consequences, peculiar to the Communists. We the deputies of the Armenian National Assembly, remaining loyal to the people's collective will as expressed in the 21 September 1991 referendum on independence, affirm our resolve to defend the Armenian Republic's constitutional order and thwart any plot against our national interests and independent statehood.

Armenia: Defense Official Says Karabakh Not Planning Any Offensive

NC1803210796 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1400 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, March 18 (NOYAN TAPAN) — Below is an interview with First Deputy Defense Minister of Karabakh, General-Major Seyran Ohanyan.

Q: Mr. Ohanyan, how would you describe the current situation in the conflict zone?

A: In general, the situation is calm. The sides have not been launching any large-scale combat operation for 22 months. Although, to be true, sometimes Azeri side violates the cease-fire.

Q: Some observers say that the sides are preparing for a decisive stage at which Karabakh's fate will be determined. Does this presumption correspond to the real state of affairs?

A: The Karabakh side is not elaborating offensive programs. The cease-fire maintained along the whole frontline is used to enhance Karabakh's Army efficiency, repair military vehicles and strengthen military positions. In recent months we have been paying great attention to military training of Army's officers.

Q: Is it possible that the military operations be renewed?

A: Although there are all signs for peaceful settlement of the conflict, the current deadlock at the negotiations over the Karabakh conflict is fraught with danger of renewal of military stand-off. The official Baku is unwilling to meet our demand — to recongnize independence of Karabakh — and continuing to propose the status under which Karabakh will remain within Azerbaijan. The Karabakh side, for its part, refuses to return occupied territories unless there are firm guarantees ensuring safety of the people of Karabakh. Such mutually-exclusive positions of the parties to the conflict may lead to strengthening of tensions. And the Karabakh Army is prepared to any scenario of development of the situation. If in a not so distant future [as received] Azerbaijan's national army confronted poorly armed and irregular detachments of the so-called "fidains" [fighters], now Karabakh has an efficient regular Army able to confront enemy and resolve more complex tasks. But I want to reiterate, Karabakh does not plan any offensive.

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Q: During the negotiations participants very often referred to the necessity of deploying international peacekeepers in the conflict zone.

A: Undoubtedly, the presence of international peacekeepers will ease the tensions. However, we think that they should be deployed along the whole front-line, rather than in our logistics (Lachin and Shusha), where there is no need to separate the conflicting sides. We'll ensure peace in our logistics by ourselves.

Armenia: Prime Minister Receives German Parliamentary Delegation

NC1803222096 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 2000 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Armenian Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan today received a German delegation headed Hans Klein, deputy president of Bundestag. The sides confirmed during the conversation that a substantive improvement in Armenian-German ties is noticeable, and examined economic and political issues by placing special emphasis on the major regional problems.

Georgia

Georgia: Shevardnadze Departs for Moscow; Aide Previews Visit

LD1803134896 Tbilisi SAKINFORM in Russian 1240 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze left for Moscow on an official visit on 18 March. [passage omitted]

Deputy Foreign Minister Mikheil Ukleba, head of the Georgian Foreign Ministry delegation, has told a SAKINFORM correspondent from Moscow that the Georgian and Russian presidents will sign a large package of agreements, including an economic and trade agreement for 1996-1997.

In Ukleba's words, the talks will focus on a peaceful settlement of the Abkhaz conflict, in particular the renewal of the mandate to the Russian peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone.

The Georgian president will meet the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeniy Primakov, this evening. A meeting between Shevardnadze and President Boris Yeltsin, as well as Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, has been planned for 19 March. It is expected that Shevardnadze will meet the chairmen of both of the State Duma chambers, the mayor of Moscow, and other heads of the Russian state and the government. The visit will last two days.

Georgia: Weekly Interview With Shevardnadze

LD1803145096 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0600 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze by program announcer Nato Oniani — live]

[FBIS Translated Text]

[Oniani] We present an interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. Mr. President, among the past week's significant events in the country's economy, we could point out your meeting with Terry Adams, head of the Operational Company of the International Oil Consortium. You also met with Dennis Corboy, the EU envoy to Georgia, and [Daniel Strobance], author of one of the projects on the Europe-Asia corridor. This means that the idea of the Europe-Asia corridor is actually coming into force. Yet another subject, which I reckon should be considered in this first question along with other issues on the economy — Turkmenistan's President Saparmurad Niyazov will be arriving in Georgia in a few days' time, or to be precise, in two days' time. You visited Turkmenistan several times. The Georgian people remember the great assistance Turkmenistan gave to our country. What exactly can we expect from this visit and could we consider this visit as a part of the development of the Europe-Asia corridor?

[Shevardnadze] Good morning. The fact that meetings and negotiations on the issues of foreign economic relations have become a common and customary occurrence for Georgia demonstrates an intense process of Georgia's integration into the world's economic network. From this point of view, special attention should be paid to the discussions on the priority objectives of the first stage of implementing agreements on the westward oil pipeline held by the Georgian president and Terry Adams, president of the Operational Company of the International Oil Consortium. These objectives envision the restructuring and improvement of an existing pipeline, railroad routes, and highways, the construction of terminals of international standards, and other work. Implementation of the project has major importance from the point of view of not only getting revenues from transporting oil but also reviving various spheres of Georgia's economy. The volume of transit goods will increase, construction and other enterprises of the country will win orders, and jobs will be created.

This issue is not limited by Georgia's interest only. Firms and organizations of many countries of the world, including Russia, Turkey, and the Western states, are interested in this enterprise. This was confirmed at the meeting with [Daniel Strobance], chairman of the

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Eurocommission's department for the transport corridor, which was held on 15 March and which proceeded in a very interesting way. The EU and the World Bank are allocating to us loans for restructuring and restoring railroads and highways. Our population is well aware of the present state of our railroads and highways. So, the involvement of such powerful financial centers of the world will be of vital significance for Georgia.

[Oniani] It is impossible to visualize Georgia as a transit country without all this.

[Shevardnadze] Indeed. And our Western partners perceive this. Along with other vital economic and political issues, the utilization of the transit possibilities of the transport corridor will be a major topic to be discussed during this week's important visit to Georgia by the Turkmen president, Saparmurad Niyazov. It is well known that Mr. Niyazov has been doing almost impossible things in Georgia's support and I believe that this new meeting with him will clearly demonstrate this support. Our meetings with the Russian president, the Russian prime minister, and other leaders will also be very important. I will say a few words about this later during the interview.

The issue of restructuring Georgia's debts will have a central position among other economic issues to be discussed during talks with the leaders of these two countries. The goodwill displayed by the leadership of the IMF, the World Bank, Turkmenistan, and Russia creates the hope that talks on the issue will be a success. This itself is an essential condition for consistent realization of our economic programs.

Now, a few words about some economic and financial problems. The effectiveness of the country's economy is our main and crucial objective and financial stability remains its principal indicator. The state of the country's economy is primarily assessed through the stability of currency. Georgia's achievements in this sphere cause no doubts. The reliability of Georgia's national currency, the lari, has already become a norm of life. No serious changes have been observed lately.

Implementation of the state budget is our principal target this year. Because of individual subjective or objective factors, results were not good enough in the beginning of the year. Yet, certain positive shifts can be observed during the past two weeks. However, an encouraging pace of development has not yet been reached.

According to preliminary reports by the Tax Inspectorate, 25 million lari collected as tax revenue since the beginning of the year is almost twice as much as the sum collected during two and a half months of 1995.

There are signs of improvements in the reports received from the Customs Department. Revenues received from customs in the first half of March made almost 2 million lari, that is, the objectives of this month have already been met by 70 percent.

At the same time, great attention is still required to further speed up the revival of industry. According to the final data, the indices of industrial output in January and February appeared to be higher than those assessed preliminarily. In particular, the rise in industrial output was almost 11.5 percent. The same trend is observed in the output of consumer products. Of these, the rise in light industry production exceeded 21 percent. This is an especially good sign which should be welcomed.

Actual results are better than the preliminarily assessed ones in the construction, trade, service, and some other spheres.

According to the data supplied by the Ministry of the Economy, enterprises of the Sakmetalurgia holding firm increased their output in the first ten days of March. Kutaisi industrial enterprises also have positive results. Changes for the better can be seen in Marneuli, Kareli, Martvili, and other districts. Other cities and districts must spare no efforts to achieve the same.

According to the data received from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, 97,000 hectares of land have been plowed and prepared for spring cultures by 12 March. About 450 tonnes of seeds have been allocated for sowing cereal crops. There is a sufficient amount of seeds for vegetables, corn, and melons. Shops to dispense pesticides and fertilizers have been opened in 19 districts.

Yet, there is still very much to be done. The agricultural season is in full swing and the well being of our people depends strongly on how we will cope with the problems. Hopefully, our population will cope with them successfully.

[Oniani] Akhsarbek Galazov, president of North Ossetia, visited Georgia last week. A meeting between two officials is one thing; the goodwill displayed by politicians or sportsmen in front of thousands of spectators at a stadium [a soccer game was played between Georgian and North Ossetian teams] and normal and adequate understanding of this by the people is another thing. This was no longer just etiquette. It was probably the best action staged against ethnic conflicts and, generally, separatism. It is significant that both conflicting sides participated in the action. During your meeting with Galazov, the idea of the Caucasus dialogue and the initiative for a peaceful Caucasus were discussed. We know about it although the meeting was held behind closed doors.

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[Shevardnadze] President Galazov's visit and the Georgian and Ossetian sports festival were unique events in essence and point to the potential existing in the age-old traditions of the Caucasus peoples and the Georgian and Ossetian peoples in particular. Our conversation about the peaceful Caucasus and the Caucasus dialogue was extremely interesting and fruitful. It proceeded in the same context as our conversations with [Azerbaijani] President Aliyev. I have thoroughly studied Akhsarbek Galazov's views and fully support them. I believe that the dialogue has great prospects.

[Oniani] We could probably say that the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict is at a more difficult stage. The mandate of the peacekeeping forces stationed in the conflict zone expires on 19 April. Your official visit to Moscow starts today. The topic of the visit will obviously be the Abkhaz-Georgian and Ossetian-Georgian conflicts.

[Shevardnadze] Many people ask me what we can expect from this visit. I would answer in this way: Expectations should not exceed what can be done at today's stage of Russian-Georgian relations...

[Oniani interrupts] Sorry to interrupt you but you made almost the same statement before the 19 January [CIS] summit.

[Shevardnadze] It was the same because the question was the same [laughs]. We have to take into account that Russia is not living a happy life just now.

This will be the first official visit to Russia by the president of independent Georgia. I believe that against the background of the centuries-old contradictory relations between Russia and Georgia, this fact in itself is significant and says a lot. I would like to emphasize that Georgia's true independence has become possible against the background of Russia gaining its sovereignty. Today, we are dealing with a new Russia and a new Georgia. Our pains are equal and many of our vital interests coincide. So, the visit will in all cases be historic, and this is no exaggeration, even only because this is the first official visit. I am grateful to Boris Yeltsin, at whose initiative this meeting will take place.

Placing the Caucasus problems in the focus of the Russian- Georgian dialogue will be the most significant point. It will certainly include the conflict in Abkhazia and prospects of settling the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. What will the results of the visit be? What shall we achieve concretely? I think we will speak about this after we come back.

[Oniani] Your visit [to Russia] will be even more interesting against the background of what is happening in Russia and around Russia today. Last week, on 15 March, the Russian State Duma made an incomprehensible decision to revoke the December 1991 Belovezh agreements. Indeed, this resolution has no power of law but the fact by itself causes concern as a trend within a significant part of contemporary Russian politics.

[Shevardnadze] Radio listeners have already heard my brief comment on the subject, I guess.

Judging from the reaction to the Duma's resolution from all around the world and especially from the CIS leaders, including strong assessments by the presidents of our two closest neighbors, Armenia and Azerbaijan, we can draw the following conclusion: The communists have caused the most serious damage to their own interests. A platform like this will lead to ultimate defeat for them even if we presume theoretically that they win the presidential election.

Against this background, President Yeltsin's figure has become even more graphic and he is capable of withstanding the forces which drive the CIS countries, and primarily Russia, toward a totalitarian system.

As far as Georgia is concerned, the whole community, the parliament and the authorities on the whole are filled with indignation and vexed by what has happened. Our task is to be on the alert and to increase our efforts tenfold to strengthen the country's independence and sovereignty and to improve the people's well being. We have acquired an array of friends all over the world. We have millions of sincere supporters in Russia and the CIS and no force can hinder our people's urge to build a free, strong, and democratic state.

Obviously, it seems consistent that the Union of Citizens of Georgia [Shevardnadze's party], along with other public organizations and parties, intends to celebrate in a special way the anniversary of [the 1991] referendum in Georgia on 31 March. The Georgian parliament is also planning to mark the anniversary in a special way. This is Georgia's reaction to the issue you mentioned.

[Oniani] Thank you. You have been listening to Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

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